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Three Feathers.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MABYN DREAMS.



"E S, mother," said Maby, bursting into the room, "here I am; and Jennifer's downstairs, with my box; and I am to stay with you here for another week or a fortnight; and Wenna's to go back at once, for the whole world is convulsed because of Mr. Trelyon's coming of age; and Mrs. Trelyon has sent and taken all our spare rooms; and father says Wenna must come back directly, for it's always 'Wenna, do this,' and 'Wenna, do that;' and if Wenna isn't there, of course the sky will tumble down on the earth — Mother, what's the matter, and where's Wenna?"

Maby was suddenly brought up in the middle of her voluble speech by the strange expression on her mother's face.

"Oh, Maby, something dreadful has happened to our Wenna."

Maby turned deadly white.

"Is she ill?" she said, almost in a whisper.

"No, not ill; but a great trouble has fallen on her."

Then the mother, in a low voice, apparently fearful that any one should overhear, began to tell her younger daughter of all she had learnt within the past day or two—how young Trelyon had been bold enough to tell Wenna that he loved her; how Wenna had dallied with her conscience and been loth to part with him; how at length she had as good as revealed to him that she loved him in return; and how she was now overwhelmed and crushed beneath a sense of her own faithlessness and the impossibility of making reparation to her betrothed.

"Only to think, Mabyn," said the mother, in accents of despair, "that all this distress should have come about in such a quiet and unexpected way! Who could have foreseen it? Why, of all people in the world, you would have thought our Wenna was the least likely to have any misery of this sort; and many a time, don't you remember, I used to say it was so wise of her getting engaged to a prudent and elderly man, who would save her from the plagues and trials that young girls often suffer at the hands of their lovers? I thought she was so comfortably settled. Everything promised her a quiet and gentle life. And now this sudden shock has come upon her, she seems to think she is not fit to live, and she goes on in such a wild way —"

"Where is she?" Mabyn said, abruptly.

"No, no, no," the mother said, anxiously. "You must not speak a word to her, Mabyn. You must not let her know I have told you anything about it. Leave her to herself for a while at least; if you spoke to her, she would take it you meant to accuse her; for she says you warned her, and she would pay no heed. Leave her to herself, Mabyn."

"Then where is Mr. Trelyon?" said Mabyn, with some touch of indignation in her voice. "What is he doing? Is he leaving her to herself too?"

"I don't know what you mean, Mabyn," her mother said, timidly.

"Why doesn't he come forward like a man, and marry her?" said Mabyn, boldly. "Yes, that is what I would do, if I were a man. She has sent him away? Yes, of course. That is right and proper. And Wenna will go on doing what is right and proper, if you allow her, to the very end, and the end will be a lifetime of misery, that's all. No, my notion is that she should do something that is not right and is quite improper, if only it makes her happy; and you'll see if I don't get her to do it. Why, mother, haven't you had eyes to see that these two have been in love for years? Nobody in the world had ever the least control over him but her; he would do anything for Wenna; and she—why she always came back singing after she had met and spoken to him. And then you talk about a prudent and sensible husband! I don't want Wenna to marry a watchful, mean, old stocking-darning cripple, who will creep about the house all day, and peer into cupboards, and give her fourpence-halfpenny a week to live on. I want her to marry a man, one

that is strong enough to protect her ; and I tell you, mother—I've said it before and I say it again—she *shall not* marry Mr. Roscorla."

"Mabyn," said her mother, "you are getting madder than ever. Your dislike to Mr. Roscorla is most unreasonable. A cripple!—why ——"

"Oh, mother!" Mabyn cried, with a bright light on her face, "only think of our Wenna being married to Mr. Trelyon, and how happy, and pleased, and pretty she would look as they went walking together! And then how proud he would be to have so nice a wife: and he would joke about her, and be very impertinent, but he would simply worship her all the same and do everything he could to please her. And he would take her away and show her all the beautiful places abroad; and he would have a yacht, too; and he would give her a fine house in London; and don't you think our Wenna would fascinate everybody with her mouse-like ways, and her nice, small steps? And if they did have any trouble, wouldn't she be better to have somebody with her, not timid, and anxious, and pettifogging, but somebody who wouldn't be cast down, but make her as brave as himself?"

Miss Mabyn was a shrewd young woman, and she saw that her mother's quick, imaginative, sympathetic nature was being captivated by this picture. She determined to have her as an ally.

"And don't you see, mother, how it all lies within her reach? Harry Trelyon is in love with her—there was no need for him to say so—I knew it long before he did. And she—why, she has told him now that she cares for him; and if I were he, I know what I'd do in his place. What is there in the way? Why, a—a sort of understanding ——"

"A promise, Mabyn," said the mother.

"Well, a promise," said the girl, desperately, and colouring somewhat. "But it was a promise given in ignorance—she didn't know—how could she know? Everybody knows that such promises are constantly broken. If you are in love with somebody else, what's the good of your keeping the promise? Now, mother, won't you argue with her? See here. If she keeps her promise, there's three people miserable. If she breaks it, there's only one—and I doubt whether he's got the capacity to be miserable. That's two to one, or three to one, is it? Now will you argue with her, mother?"

"Mabyn, Mabyn," the mother said, with a shake of the head, but evidently pleased with the voice of the tempter, "your fancy has run away with you. Why, Mr. Trelyon has never proposed to marry her."

"I know he wants to," said Mabyn, confidently.

"How can you know?"

"I'll ask him and prove it to you."

"Indeed," said the mother, sadly, "it is no thought of marriage that is in Wenna's head just now. The poor girl is full of remorse and apprehension. I think she would like to start at once for Jamaica, and fling herself at Mr. Roscorla's feet, and confess her fault. I am glad she has

to go back to Eglosilyan ; that may distract her mind in a measure ; at present she is suffering more than she shows."

"Where is she?"

"In her own room, tired out and fast asleep. I looked in a few minutes ago."

Mabyn went upstairs, after having seen that Jennifer had properly bestowed her box. Wenna had just risen from the sofa, and was standing in the middle of the room. Her younger and taller sister went blithely forward to her, kissed her as usual, took no notice of the sudden flush of red that sprang into her face, and proceeded to state, in a business-like fashion, all the arrangements that had to be made.

"Have you been enjoying yourself, Wenna?" Mabyn said, with a fine air of indifference.

"Oh, yes," Wenna answered; adding hastily, "don't you think mother is greatly improved?"

"Wonderfully. I almost forgot she was an invalid. How lucky you are to be going back to see all the fine doings at the Hall; of course they will ask you up."

"They will do nothing of the kind," Wenna said, with some asperity, and with her face turned aside.

"Lord and Lady Amersham have already come to the Hall."

"Oh, indeed!"

"Yes; they said some time ago that there was a good chance of Mr. Trelyon marrying the daughter—the tall girl with yellow hair, you remember?"

"And the stooping shoulders? yes. I should think they would be glad to get her married to anybody. She's thirty."

"Oh, Wenna!"

"Mr. Trelyon told me so," said Wenna, sharply.

"And they are a little surprised," continued Mabyn, in the same indifferent way, but watching her sister all the while, "that Mr. Trelyon has remained absent until so near the time. But I suppose he means to take Miss Penaluna with him. She lives here, doesn't she? They used to say there was a chance of a marriage there, too."

"Mabyn, what do you mean?" Wenna said, suddenly and angrily. "What do I care about Mr. Trelyon's marriage? What is it you mean?"

But the firmness of her lips began to yield; there was an ominous trembling about them; and at the same moment her younger sister caught her to her bosom, and hid her face there, and hushed her wild sobbing. She would hear no confession. She knew enough. Nothing would convince her that Wenna had done anything wrong; so there was no use speaking about it.

"Wenna," she said, in a low voice, "have you sent him any message?"

"Oh, no, no," the girl said, trembling. "I fear even to think of

him ; and when you mentioned his name, Mabyn, it seemed to choke me. And now I have to go back to Eglosilyan ; and oh ! if you only knew how I dread that, Mabyn ! ”

Mabyn's conscience was struck. She it was who had done this thing. She had persuaded her father that her mother needed another week or fortnight at Penzance ; she had frightened him by telling what bother he would suffer if Wenna were not back at the inn during the festivities at Trelyon Hall ; and then she had offered to go and take her sister's post. George Rosewarne was heartily glad to exchange the one daughter for the other. Mabyn was too independent. She thwarted him ; sometimes she insisted on his bestirring himself. Wenna, on the other hand, went about the place like some invisible spirit of order, making everything comfortable for him, without noise or worry. He was easily led to issue the necessary orders ; and so it was that Mabyn thought she was doing her sister a friendly turn by sending her back to Eglosilyan in order to join in congratulating Harry Trelyon on his entrance into man's estate. Now Mabyn found that she had only plunged her sister into deeper trouble.

What could be done to save her ?

“ Wenna,” said Mabyn, rather timidly, “ do you think he has left Penzance ? ”

Wenna turned to her with a sudden look of entreaty in her face.

“ I cannot bear to speak of him, Mabyn. I have no right to—I hope you, will not ask me. Just now I—I am going to write a letter—to Jamaica. I shall tell the whole truth. It is for him to say what must happen now. I have done him a great injury. I did not intend it ; I had no thought of it ; but my own folly and thoughtlessness brought it about, and I have to bear the penalty. I don't think he need be anxious about punishing me.”

She turned away with a tired look on her face, and began to get out her writing materials. Mabyn watched her for a moment or two in silence ; then she left and went to her own room, saying to herself, “ Punishment ? whoever talks of punishment will have to address himself to me.”

When she got to her own room, she wrote these words on a piece of paper—in her firm, bold, free hand—“ *A friend would like to see you for a minute in front of the Post Office in the middle of the town.* ” She put that in an envelope, and addressed the envelope to Harry Trelyon, Esq. Still keeping her bonnet on, she went downstairs, and had a little general conversation with her mother, in the course of which she quite casually asked the name of the hotel at which Mr. Trelyon had been staying. Then, just as if she were going out to the parade to have a look at the sea, she carelessly left the house.

The dusk of the evening was growing to dark. A white mist lay over the sea. The solitary lamps were being lit along the parade—each golden star shining sharply in the pale purple twilight ; but a more confused glow of orange showed where the little town was busy in its narrow thoroughfares.

She got hold of a small boy, gave him the letter, sixpence, and his instructions. He was to ask if the gentleman were in the hotel. If not, had he left Penzance, or would he return that night? In any case the boy was not to leave the letter unless Mr. Trelyon were there.

The small boy returned in a couple of minutes. The gentleman was there, and had taken the letter. So Mabyn at once set out for the centre of the town, and soon found herself in among a mass of huddled houses, bright shops, and thoroughfares pretty well filled with strolling sailors, women getting home from market, and townspeople come out to gossip. She had accurately judged that she would be less observed in this busy little place than out on the parade; and as it was the first appointment she had ever made to meet a young gentleman alone, she was just a little nervous.

Trelyon was there. He had recognized the handwriting in a moment. He had no time to ridicule or even to think of Mabyn's school-girl affectation of secrecy; he had at once rushed off to the place of appointment, and that by a short cut, of which she had no knowledge.

"Mabyn, what's the matter? Is Wenna ill?" he said—forgetting in his anxiety even to shake hands with her.

"Oh, no, she isn't," said Mabyn, rather coldly and defiantly. If he was in love with her sister, it was for him to make advances.

"Oh, no, she's pretty well, thank you," continued Mabyn, indifferently. "But she never could stand much worry. I wanted to see you about that. She is going back to Eglosilyn to-morrow; and you must promise not to have her asked up to the Hall while these grand doings are going on—you must not try to see her and persuade her—if you could keep out of her way altogether —"

"You know all about it, then, Mabyn?" he said, suddenly; and even in the dusky light of the street, she could see the rapid look of gladness that filled his face. "And you are not going to be vexed, eh? You'll remain friends with me, Mabyn—you will tell me how she is from time to time. Don't you see I must go away—and, and, by Jove, Mabyn, I've got such a lot to tell you!"

She looked round.

"I can't talk to you here. Won't you walk back by the other road behind the town?" he said.

Yes, she would go willingly with him now. The anxiety of his face, the almost wild way in which he seemed to beg for her help and friendship, the mere impatience of his manner pleased and satisfied her. This was as it should be. Here was no sweetheart by line and rule, demonstrating his affection by argument, and acting at all times with a studied propriety; but a real, true lover, full of passionate hope and as passionate fear, ready to do anything, and yet not knowing what to do. Above all he was "brave and handsome, like a Prince!" and therefore a fit lover for her gentle sister.

"Oh, Mr. Trelyon," she said, with a great burst of confidence, "I did so fear that you might be indifferent!"

"Indifferent!" said he, with some bitterness. "Perhaps that is the best thing that could happen; only it isn't very likely to happen. Did you ever see anybody placed as I am placed, Mabyn? Nothing but stumbling-blocks every way I look. Our family have always been hot-headed and hot-tempered; if I told my grandmother at this minute how I am situated, I believe she would say, 'Why don't you go like a man, and run off with the girl?' —"

"Yes!" said Mabyn, quite delighted.

"But suppose you've bothered and worried the girl until you feel ashamed of yourself, and she begs of you to leave her, aren't you bound in fair manliness to go?"

"I don't know," said Mabyn, doubtfully.

"Well, I do. It would be very mean to pester her. I'm off as soon as these people leave the Hall. But then there are other things. There is your sister engaged to this fellow out in Jamaica —"

"Isn't he a horrid wretch?" said Mabyn, between her teeth.

"Oh, I quite agree with you. If I could have it out with him now — but, after all, what harm has the man done? Is it any wonder he wanted to get Wenna for a wife?"

"Oh, but he cheated her," said Mabyn, warmly. "He persuaded her, and reasoned with her, and argued her into marrying him. And what business had he to tell her that love between young people is all bitterness and trial; and that a girl is only safe when she marries a prudent and elderly man who will look after her? Why, it is to look after him that he wants her. Wenna is going to him as a housekeeper and a nurse. Only—only, Mr. Trelyon, *she hasn't gone to him just yet!*"

"Oh, I don't think he did anything unfair," the young man said, gloomily. "It doesn't matter anyhow. What I was going to say is that my grandmother's notion of what one of our family ought to do in such a case can't be carried out: whatever you may think of a man, you can't go and try to rob him of his sweetheart behind his back. Even supposing she was willing to break with him, which she is not, you've at least got to wait to give the fellow a chance."

"There I quite disagree with you, Mr. Trelyon," Mabyn said, warmly. "Wait to give him a chance to make our Wenna miserable? Is she to be made the prize of a sort of fight? If I were a man, I'd pay less attention to my own scruples and try what I could do for her. . . . Oh, Mr. Trelyon—I—I beg your pardon."

Mabyn suddenly stopped on the road, overwhelmed with confusion. She had been so warmly thinking of her sister's welfare that she had been hurried into something worse than an indiscretion.

"What, then, Mabyn?" said he, profoundly surprised.

"I beg your pardon. I have been so thoughtless. I had no right to assume that you wished—that you wished for the—for the opportunity —"

"Of marrying Wenna?" said he, with a great stare. "But what

else have we been speaking about? Or rather, I suppose we did assume it. Well, the more I think of it, Mabyn, the more I am maddened by all these obstacles, and by the notion of all the things that may happen. That's the bad part of my going away. How can I tell what may happen? He might come back, and insist on her marrying him right off."

"Mr. Trelyon," said Mabyn, speaking very clearly, "there's one thing you may be sure of. If you let me know where you are, nothing will happen to Wenna that you don't hear of."

He took her hand, and pressed it in mute thankfulness. He was not insensible to the value of having so warm an advocate, so faithful an ally, always at Wenna's side.

"How long do letters take in going to Jamaica?" Mabyn asked.

"I don't know."

"I could fetch him back for you directly," said she, "if you would like that."

"How?"

"By writing and telling him that you and Wenna were going to get married. Wouldn't that fetch him back pretty quickly?"

"I doubt it. He wouldn't believe it of Wenna. Then he is a sensible sort of fellow, and would say to himself that, if the news was true, he would have his journey for nothing. Besides, Barnes says that things are looking well with him in Jamaica—better than anybody expected. He might not be anxious to leave."

They had now got back to the parade, and Mabyn stopped.

"I must leave you now, Mr. Trelyon. Mind not to go near Wenna when you get to Eglosilyan —"

"She shan't even see me. I shall be there only a couple of days or so; then I am going to London. I am going to have a try at the Civil Service examinations—for first commissions, you know. I shall only come back to Eglosilyan for a day now and again at long intervals. You have promised to write to me, Mabyn—well, I'll send you my address."

She looked at him keenly as she offered him her hand.

"I wouldn't be downhearted if I were you," she said. "Very odd things sometimes happen."

"Oh, I shan't be very downhearted," said he, "so long as I hear that she is all right, and not vexing herself about anything."

"Good-by, Mr. Trelyon. I am sorry I can't take any message for you."

"To her? No, that is impossible. Good-by, Mabyn; I think you are the best friend I have in the world."

"We'll see about that," she said, as she walked rapidly off.

Her mother had been sufficiently astonished by her long absence; she was now equally surprised by the excitement and pleasure visible in her face.

"Oh, mammy, do you know whom I've seen? Mr. Trelyon!"

"Mabyn!"

"Yes. We've walked right round Penzance—all by ourselves. And it's all settled, mother."

"What is all settled?"

"The understanding between him and me. An offensive and defensive alliance. Let tyrants beware!"

She took off her bonnet, and came and sat down on the floor by the side of the sofa.

"Oh, mammy, I see such beautiful things in the future—you wouldn't believe it if I told you all I see! Everybody else seems determined to forecast such gloomy events—there's Wenna crying and writing letters of contrition, and expecting all sorts of anger and scolding; there's Mr. Trelyon, haunted by the notion that Mr. Roscorla will suddenly come home and marry Wenna right off; and as for him out there in Jamaica, I expect he'll be in a nice state when he hears of all this. But far on ahead of all that I see such a beautiful picture ——"

"It is a dream of yours, Mabyn," her mother said; but there was an imaginative light in her fine eyes, too.

"No, it is not a dream, mother; for there are so many people all wishing now that it should come about, in spite of these gloomy fancies. What is there to prevent it, when we are all agreed? Mr. Trelyon and I heading the list with our important alliance; and you, mother, would be so proud to see Wenna happy; and Mrs. Trelyon pets her as if she were a daughter already, and everybody—every man, woman, and child in Eglosilyan—would rather see that come about than get a guinea apiece. Oh, mother, if you could see the picture that I see just now ——"

"It is a pretty picture, Mabyn," her mother said, shaking her head. "But when you think of everybody being agreed, you forget one, and that is Wenna herself. Whatever she thinks fit and right to do, that she is certain to do; and all your alliances and friendly wishes won't alter her decision, even if it should break her heart. And, indeed, I hope the poor child won't sink under the terrible strain that is on her: what do you think of her looks, Mabyn?"

"They want mending; yes, they want mending," Mabyn admitted, apparently with some compunction; but then she added, boldly, "and you know as well as I do, mother, that there is but the one way of mending them!"

CHAPTER XXX.

FERN IN DIE WELT.

If this story were not tied by its title to the Duchy of Cornwall, it might be interesting enough to follow Mr. Roscorla into the new world that had opened all around him, and say something of the sudden shock his old habits had thus received, and of the quite altered views of his own life he had been led to form. As matters stand, we can only pay him a flying visit.

He is seated in a verandah, fronting a garden, in which pomegranates and oranges form the principal fruit. Down below him some blacks are bringing provisions up to Yacca Farm, along the cactus avenue leading to the gate. Far away on his right, the last rays of the sun are shining on the summit of Blue Mountain Peak ; and along the horizon the reflected glow of the sky shines on the calm sea. It is a fine, still evening ; his cigar smells sweet in the air ; it is a time for indolent dreaming and for memories of home.

But Mr. Roscorla is not so much enraptured by thoughts of home as he might be.

"Why," he is saying to himself, "my life in Basset Cottage was no life at all, but only a waiting for death. Day after day passed in that monotonous fashion ; what had one to look forward to but old age, sickness, and then the quiet of a coffin ? It was nothing but an hourly procession to the grave, varied by rabbit-shooting. This bold breaking away from the narrow life of such a place has given me a new lease of existence. Now I can look back with surprise on the dulness of that Cornish village, and on the regularity of habits which I did not know were habits. For is not that always the case ? You don't know that you are forming a habit ; you take each act to be an individual act, which you may perform or not at will ; but all the same the succession of them is getting you into its power, custom gets a grip of your ways of thinking as well as your ways of living ; the habit is formed, and it does not cease its hold until it conducts you to the grave. Try Jamaica for a cure. Fling a sleeping man into the sea, and watch if he does not wake. Why, when I look back to the slow, methodical, commonplace life I led at Eglosilyan, can I wonder that I was sometimes afraid of Wenna Rosewarne regarding me as a somewhat staid and venerable person, on whose infirmities she ought to take pity ?"

He rose and began to walk up and down the verandah, putting his foot down firmly. His loose linen suit was smart enough ; his complexion had been improved by the sun. The consciousness that his business affairs were promising well did not lessen his sense of self-importance.

"Wenna must be prepared to move about a bit when I go back," he was saying to himself. "She must give up that daily attendance on cottagers' children. If all turns out well, I don't see why we should not live in London ; for who will know there who her father was ? That consideration was of no consequence so long as I looked forward to living the rest of my life in Basset Cottage ; now there are other things to be thought of when there is a chance of my going among my old friends again."

By this time, it must be observed, Mr. Roscorla had abandoned his hasty intention of returning to England to upbraid Wenna with having received a ring from Harry Trelyon. After all, he reasoned with himself, the mere fact that she should talk thus simply and frankly about young

Trelyon showed that, so far as she was concerned, her loyalty to her absent lover was unbroken. As for the young gentleman himself, he was, Mr. Roscorla knew, fond of joking. He had doubtless thought it a fine thing to make a fool of two or three women by imposing on them this cock-and-bull story of finding a ring by dredging. He was a little angry that Wenna should have been deceived; but then, he reflected, these gipsy-rings are so much like one another that the young man had probably got a pretty fair duplicate. For the rest, he did not want to quarrel with Harry Trelyon at present.

But as he was walking up and down this verandah, looking a much younger and brisker man than the Mr. Roscorla who had left Eglosilyan, a servant came through the house and brought him a couple of letters. He saw they were respectively from Mr. Barnes and from Wenna; and, curiously enough, he opened the reverend gentleman's first—perhaps as schoolboys like to leave the best bit of a tart to the last.

He read the letter over carefully; he sat down and read it again; then he put it before him on the table. He was evidently puzzled by it.

"What does this man mean by writing these letters to me?"—so Mr. Roscorla, who was a cautious and reflective person, communed with himself. "He is no particular friend of mine. He must be driving at something. Now he says that I am to be of good cheer. I must not think anything of what he formerly wrote. Mr. Trelyon is leaving Eglosilyan for good, and his mother will at last have some peace of mind. What a pity it is that this sensitive creature should be at the mercy of the rude passions of this son of hers—that she should have no protector—that she should be allowed to mope herself to death in a melancholy seclusion."

An odd fancy occurred to Mr. Roscorla at this moment, and he smiled.

"I think I have got a clue to Mr. Barnes's disinterested anxiety about my affairs. The widower would like to protect the solitary and unfriended widow; but the young man is in the way. The young man would be very much in the way if he married Wenna Rosewarne; the widower's fears drive him into suspicion, then into certainty; nothing will do but that I should return to England at once, and spoil this little arrangement. But as soon as Harry Trelyon declares his intention of leaving Eglosilyan for good, then my affairs may go anyhow. Mr. Barnes finds the coast clear; I am bidden to stay where I am. Well, that is what I mean to do; but now I fancy I understand Mr. Barnes's generous friendship for me and his affectionate correspondence."

He turned to Wenna's letter with much compunction. He owed her some stonement for having listened to the disingenuous reports of this scheming clergyman. How could he have so far forgotten the firm, uncompromising rectitude of the girl's character, her sensitive notions of honour, the promises she had given?

He read her letter, and as he read his eyes seemed to grow hot with rage. He paid no heed to the passionate contrition of the trembling lines ; to the obvious pain that she had endured in telling the story, without concealment, against herself ; to the utter and abject wretchedness with which she awaited his decision. It was thus that she had kept faith with him the moment his back was turned. Such were the safeguards afforded by a woman's sense of honour. What a fool he had been, to imagine that any woman could remain true to her promise, so soon as some other object of flirtation and incipient love-making came in her way !

He looked at the letter again : he could scarcely believe it to be in her handwriting. This the quiet, reasonable, gentle, and timid Wenna Rosewarne, whose virtues were almost a trifle too severe ? The despair and remorse of the letter did not touch him—he was too angry and indignant over the insult to himself—but it astonished him. The passionate emotion of those closely-written pages he could scarcely connect with the shy, frank, kindly little girl he remembered ; it was a cry of agony from a tortured woman, and he knew at least that for her the old, quiet time was over.

He knew not what to do. All this that had happened was new to him ; it was old and gone by in England, and who could tell what further complications might have arisen ? But his anger required some vent ; he went in-doors, called for a lamp, and sat down and wrote, with a hard and resolute look on his face :—

“I have received your letter. I am not surprised. You are a woman ; and I ought to have known that a woman's promise is of value so long as you are by her side to see that she keeps it. You ask what reparation you can make ; I ask if there is any that you can suggest. No ; you have done what cannot be undone. Do you think a man would marry a woman who is in love with, or has been in love with another man, even if he could overlook her breach of faith and the shameless thoughtlessness of her conduct ? My course is clear, at all events. I give you back the promise that you did not know how to keep ; and now you can go and ask the young man who has been making a holiday toy of you whether he will be pleased to marry you.

“RICHARD ROSCORLA.”

He sealed and addressed this letter, still with the firm, hard look about his face ; then he summoned a servant—a tall, red-haired Irishman. He did not hesitate for a moment.

“Look here, Sullivan, the English mails go out to-morrow morning—you must ride down to the Post Office, as hard as you can go ; and if you're a few minutes late, see Mr. Keith, and give him my compliments, and ask him if he can possibly take this letter if the mails are not made up. It is of great importance. Quick now !”

He watched the man go clattering down the cactus avenue until he was out of sight. Then he turned, put the letters in his pocket, went

in-doors, and again struck a small gong that did duty for a bell. He wanted his horse brought round at once. He was going over to Pleasant Farm; probably he would not return that night. He lit another cigar and paced up and down the gravel in front of the house until the horse was brought round.

When he reached Pleasant Farm, the stars were shining overhead, and the odours of the night-flowers came floating out of the forest; but inside the house there were brilliant lights and the voices of men talking. A bachelor supper-party was going forward. Mr. Roscorla entered, and presently was seated at the hospitable board.

They had never seen him so gay; and they had certainly never seen him so generously inclined, for Mr. Roscorla was economical in his habits. He would have them all to dinner the next evening, and promised them such champagne as had never been sent to Kingston before. He passed round his best cigars; he hinted something about unlimited loo; he drank pretty freely; and was altogether in a jovial humour.

"England?" he said, when some one mentioned the mother-country. "Of one thing I am pretty certain—England will never see me again. No—a man lives here; in England he waits for his death. What life I have got before me I shall live in Jamaica—that is my view of the question."

"Then she is coming out to you?" said his host, with a grin.

Roscorla's face flushed with anger.

"There is no she in the matter," he said, abruptly, almost fiercely.

"I thank God I am not tied to any woman."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said his host, good-naturedly, who did not care to recall the occasions on which Mr. Roscorla had been rather pleased to admit that certain tender ties bound him to his native land.

"No, there is not!" he said. "What fool would have his comfort and peace of mind depend on the caprice of a woman? I like your plan better, Rogers: when they're dependent on you, you can do as you like; but when they've got to be treated as equals, they're the devil. No, my boys, you don't find me going in for the angel in the house—she's too exacting. Is it to be unlimited?"

Now to play unlimited loo in a reckless fashion is about the easiest way of getting rid of money that the ingenuity of man has devised. The other players were much better qualified to run such risks than Mr. Roscorla; but none played half so wildly as he. I.O.U.'s went freely about. At one point in the evening the floating paper bearing the signature of Mr. Roscorla represented a sum of about 300*l.*; and yet his losses did not weigh heavily on him. At length every one got tired, and it was resolved to stop short at a certain hour. But from this point the luck changed; nothing could stand against his cards; one by one his I.O.U.'s were recalled; and when they all rose from the table, he had won about 45*l.* He was not elated.

He went to his room, and sat down in an easy-chair; and then it

seemed to him that he saw Eglosilyan once more, and the far coasts of Cornwall, and the broad uplands lying under a blue English sky. That was his home, and he had cut himself away from it, and from the little glimmer of romance that had recently brightened it for him. Every bit of the place, too, was associated somehow with Wenna Rosewarne. He could see the seat, fronting the Atlantic, on which she used to sit and sew on the fine summer forenoons. He could see the rough road, leading over the downs, on which he met her one wintry morning, she wrapped up and driving her father's dog-cart, while the red sun in the sky seemed to brighten the pink colour the cold wind had brought into her cheeks. He thought of her walking sedately up to church; of her wild scramblings among the rocks with Mabyn; of her enjoyment of a fierce wind when it came laden with the spray of the great rollers breaking on the cliff outside. What was the song she used to sing to herself as she went along the quiet woodland ways?—

Your Polly has never been false, she declares,
Since last time we parted at Wapping Old Stairs.

He could not let her go. All the anger of wounded vanity had left his heart; he thought now only of the chance he was throwing away. Where else could he hope to find for himself so pleasant a companion and friend, who would cheer up his dull daily life with her warm sympathies, her quick humour, her winning womanly ways?

He thought of that letter he had sent away, and cursed his own folly. So long as she was bound by her promise, he knew he could marry her when he pleased; but now he had voluntarily released her. In a couple of weeks she would hold her manumission in her hands; the past would no longer have any power over her; if ever they met, they would meet as mere acquaintances. Every moment the prize slipping out of his grasp seemed to grow more valuable; his vexation with himself grew intolerable; he suddenly resolved that he would make a wild effort to get back that fatal letter.

He had sat communing with himself for over an hour; all the household was fast asleep. He would not wake any one, for fear of being compelled to give explanations; so he noiselessly crept along the dark passages until he got to the door, which he carefully opened and let himself out. The night was wonderfully clear; the constellations throbbing and glittering overhead; the trees were black against the pale sky.

He made his way round to the stables, and had some sort of notion that he would try to get at his horse, until it occurred to him that some suddenly awakened servant or master would probably send a bullet whizzing at him. So he abandoned that enterprise, and set off to walk, as quickly as he could, down the slopes of the mountain, with the stars still shining over his head, the air sweet with powerful scents, the leaves of the bushes hanging silently in the semi-darkness.

How long he walked he did not know; he was not aware that, when he reached the sleeping town, a pale grey was lightening the eastern skies.

He went to the house of the postmaster and hurriedly aroused him. Mr. Keith began to think that the ordinarily sedate Mr. Roscorla had gone mad.

"But I must have the letter," he said. "Come now, Keith, you can give it me back if you like. Of course, I know it is very wrong; but you'll do it to oblige a friend —"

"My dear sir," said the postmaster, who could not get time for explanation, "the mails were made up last night —"

"Yes, yes; but you can open the English bag."

"They were sent on board last night."

"Then the packet is still in the harbour; you might come down with me —"

"She sails at daybreak —"

"It is not daybreak yet," said Mr. Roscorla, looking up.

Then he saw how the grey dawn had come over the skies, banishing the stars, and he became aware of the wan light shining around him. With the new day his life was altered; he would no more be as he had been; the chief aim and purpose of his existence had been changed.

Walking heedlessly back, he came to a point from which he had a distant view of the harbour and the sea beyond. Far away out on the dull grey plain was a steamer slowly making her way towards the east. Was that the packet bound for England, carrying to Wenna Rosewarne the message that she was free?

CHAPTER XXXI.

"BLUE IS THE SWEETEST."

THE following correspondence may now, without any great breach of confidence, be published:—

"Eglosilyan, Monday morning.

"DEAR MR. TRELYON,

"Do you know what Mr. Roscorla says in the letter Wenna has just received? Why, that you could not get up that ring by dredging, but that you must have bought the ring at Plymouth. Just think of the wicked old wretch fancying such things; as if you would give a ring of emeralds to any one! Tell me that this is a story, that I may bid Wenna contradict him at once. I have got no patience with a man who is given over to such mean suspicions.

"Yours faithfully,

"MABYN ROSEWARNE."

"London, Tuesday night.

"DEAR MABYN,

"I AM sorry to say Mr. Roscorla is right. It was a foolish trick—I did not think it would be successful, for my hitting the size of her finger was rather a stroke of luck; but I thought it would amuse her if

she did find it out after an hour or two. I was afraid to tell her afterwards, for she would think it impertinent. What's to be done? Is she angry about it?

"Yours sincerely,

"HARRY TRELYON."

"Eglosilyan.

"DEAR MR. TRELYON,

"How could you do such a thing! Why, to give Wenna, of all people in the world, an emerald ring, just after I had got Mr. Roscorla to give her one, for bad luck to himself! Why, how could you do it! I don't know what to say about it—unless you demand it back, and send her one with sapphires in it at once.

"Yours,

"P.S.—As quick as ever you can."

"M. R.

"London, Friday morning.

"DEAR MABYN,

"Why, you know she wouldn't take a sapphire ring or any other from me.

"Yours faithfully,

"H. TRELYON."

"DEAR MR. TRELYON,

"PRAY do not lose any time in writing; but send me at once a sapphire ring for Wenna. You have hit the size once, and you can do it again; but in any case, I have marked the size on this bit of thread, and the jeweller will understand. And please, dear Mr. Trelyon, don't get a very expensive one, but a plain, good one, just like what a poor person like me would buy for a present, if I wanted to. And post it at once, please—this is very important.

"Yours most sincerely,

"MABYN ROSEWARNE."

In consequence of this correspondence, Mabyn, one morning, proceeded to seek out her sister, whom she found busy with the accounts of the Sewing Club, which was now in a flourishing condition. Mabyn seemed a little shy.

"Oh, Wenna," she said, "I have something to tell you. You know I wrote to ask Mr. Trelyon about the ring. Well, he's very, very sorry—oh, you don't know how sorry he is, Wenna!—but it's quite true. He thought he would please you by getting the ring, and that you would make a joke of it when you found it out; and then he was afraid to speak of it afterwards——"

Wenna had quietly slipped the ring off her finger. She betrayed no emotion at the mention of Mr. Trelyon's name. Her face was a trifle red, that was all.

"It was a stupid thing to do," she said, "but I suppose he meant no harm. Will you send him back the ring?"

"Yes," she said, eagerly. "Give me the ring, Wenna."

She carefully wrapped it up in a piece of paper, and put it in her pocket. Any one who knew her would have seen by her face that she meant to give that ring short shrift. Then she said, timidly —

"You are not very angry, Wenna?"

"No. I am sorry I should have vexed Mr. Roscorla by my carelessness."

"Wenna," the younger sister continued, even more timidly, "do you know what I've heard about rings—that when you've worn one for some time on a finger, you ought never to leave it off altogether; I think it affects the circulation—or something of that kind. Now if Mr. Trelyon were to send you another ring, just to—to keep the place of that one until Mr. Roscorla came back —"

"Mabyn, you must be mad to think of such a thing," said her sister, looking down.

"Oh, yes," Mabyn said, meekly, "I thought you wouldn't like the notion of Mr. Trelyon giving you a ring. And so, dear Wenna, I've—I've got a ring for you—you won't mind taking it from me; and if you do wear it on the engaged finger, why, that doesn't matter, don't you see? —"

She produced the ring of dark blue stones, and herself put it on Wenna's finger.

"Oh, Mabyn," Wenna said, "how could you be so extravagant! And just after you gave me that ten shillings for the Leans."

"You be quiet," said Mabyn, briskly, going off with a light look on her face.

And yet there was some determination about her mouth. She hastily put on her hat, and went out. She took the path by the hillside over the little harbour; and eventually she reached the face of the black cliff, at the foot of which a grey-green sea was dashing in white masses of foam; there was no living thing around her but the coughts and daws, and the white seagulls sailing overhead.

She took out a large sheet of brown paper and placed it on the ground. Then she sought out a bit of rock, weighing about two pounds. Then she took out the little parcel which contained the emerald ring, tied it up carefully along with the stone in the sheet of brown paper; finally, she rose up to her full height and heaved the whole into the sea. A splash down there, and that was all.

She clapped her hands with joy.

"And now my precious emerald ring, that's the last of you, I imagine! And there isn't much chance of a fish bringing you back, to make mischief with your ugly green stones!"

Then she went home, and wrote this note:—

"Eglosilyan, Monday.

"DEAR MR. TRELYON,

"I HAVE just thrown the emerald ring you gave Wenna into the sea, and she wears the other one now on her engaged finger, but she

thinks I bought it. Did you ever hear of an old-fashioned rhyme such as this ?—

Oh, green is forsaken,
And yellow's forsworn,
And blue is the sweetest
Colour that's worn !

You can't tell what mischief that emerald ring might not have done. But the sapphires that Wenna is wearing now are perfectly beautiful ; and Wenna is not so heart-broken that she isn't very proud of them. I never saw such a beautiful ring.

" Yours sincerely,

" MABYN ROSEWARNE.

" P.S.—Are you never coming back to Eglosilyan any more ? "

So the days went by, and Mabyn waited, with a secret hope, to see what answer Mr. Roscorla would send to that letter of confession and contrition Wenna had written to him at Penzance. The letter had been written as an act of duty, and posted too ; but there was no mail going out for ten days thereafter, so that a considerable time had to elapse before the answer came.

During that time Wenna went about her ordinary duties, just as if there was no hidden fire of pain consuming her heart ; there was no word spoken by her or to her of all that had recently occurred ; her mother and sister were glad to see her so continuously busy. At first she shrank from going up to Trelyon Hall, and would rather have corresponded with Mrs. Trelyon about their joint work of charity, but she conquered the feeling, and went and saw the gentle lady, who perceived nothing altered or strange in her demeanour. At last the letter from Jamaica came ; and Mabyn, having sent it up to her sister's room, waited for a few minutes, and then followed it. She was a little afraid, despite her belief in the virtues of the sapphire ring.

When she entered the room, she uttered a slight cry of alarm and ran forward to her sister. Wenna was seated on a chair by the side of the bed, but she had thrown her arms out on the bed, her head was between them, and she was sobbing as if her heart would break.

" Wenna, what is the matter ? what has he said to you ? "

Mabyn's eyes were all afire now. Wenna would not answer. She would not even raise her head.

" Wenna, I want to see that letter. "

" Oh, no, no, " the girl moaned. " I deserve it ; he says what is true ; I want you to leave me alone, Mabyn—you—you can't do anything to help this — " "

But Mabyn had by this time perceived that her sister held in her hand, crumpled up, the letter which was the cause of this wild outburst of grief. She went forward and firmly took it out of the yielding fingers ; then she turned to the light and read it.

" Oh, if I were a man ! " she said ; and then the very passion of her

indignation, finding no other vent, filled her eyes with proud and angry tears. She forgot to rejoice that her sister was now free. She only saw the cruel insult of those lines, and the fashion in which it had struck down its victim.

"Wenna," she said, hotly, "you ought to have more spirit! You don't mean to say you care for the opinion of a man who would write to any girl like that! You ought to be precious glad that he has shown himself in his true colours. Why, he never cared a bit for you—never!—or he would never turn at a moment's notice and insult you —"

"I have deserved it all; it is every word of it true; he could not have written otherwise"—that was all that Wenna would say between her sobs.

"Well," retorted Maby, "after all I am glad he was angry. I did not think he had so much spirit. And if this is his opinion of you, I don't think it is worth heeding, only I hope he'll keep to it. Yes, I do! I hope he'll continue to think you everything that is wicked, and remain out in Jamaica. Wenna, you must not lie and cry like that. Come, get up, and look at the strawberries that Mr. Trewhella has sent you."

"Please, Maby, leave me alone, there's a good girl."

"I shall be up again in a few minutes, then; I want you to drive me over to St. Gwennis. Wenna, I *must* go over to St. Gwennis before lunch; and father won't let me have anybody to drive; do you hear, Wenna?"

Then she went out and down into the kitchen, where she bothered Jennifer for a few minutes until she had got an iron heated at the fire. With this implement she carefully smoothed out the crumpled letter, and then she as carefully folded it, took it upstairs, and put it safely away in her own desk. She had just time to write a few lines:—

"DEAR MR. TRELYON,

"Do you know what news I have got to tell you? Can you guess? The engagement between Mr. Roscorla and Wenna *is broken off*; and I have got in my possession the letter in which he sets her free. If you knew how glad I am!—I should like to cry 'Hurrah! hurrah!' all through the streets of Eglosilyan, and I think every one else would do the same if only they knew. Of course, she is very much grieved, for he has been most insulting. I cannot tell you the things he has said; you would kill him if you heard them. But she will come round very soon, I know; and then she will have her freedom again, and no more emerald rings, and letters all filled with arguments. Would you like to see her, Mr. Trelyon? But don't come yet—not for a long time—she would only get angry and obstinate. I'll tell you when to come; and in the meantime, you know, she is still wearing your ring, so that you need not be afraid. How glad I shall be to see you again!

"Yours most faithfully,

"MABYN ROSEWARNE."

She went downstairs quickly, and put this letter in the letter-box. There was an air of triumph on her face. She had worked for this result—aided by the mysterious powers of fate, whom she had conjured to serve her—and now the welcome end of her labours had arrived. She bade the ostler get out the dog-cart, as if she were the Queen of Sheba going to visit Solomon. She went marching up to her sister's room, announcing her approach with a more than ordinarily accurate rendering of "Oh, the men of merry, merry England!" so that a stranger might have fancied that he heard the very voice of Harry Trelyon, with all its unmelodious vigour, ringing along the passage.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE EXILE'S RETURN.

PERHAPS you have been away in distant parts of the earth, each day crowded with new experiences and slowly obscuring the clear pictures of England with which you left; perhaps you have only been hidden away in London, amid its ceaseless noise, its stranger faces, its monotonous recurrence of duties; let us say, in any case, that you are returning home for a space to the quiet of northern Cornwall.

You look out of the high window of a Plymouth hotel early in the morning; there is promise of a beautiful autumn day. A ring of pink mist lies around the horizon; overhead the sky is clear and blue; the white sickle of the moon still lingers visible. The new warmth of the day begins to melt the hoar frost in the meadows, and you know that out beyond the town the sun is shining brilliantly on the wet grass, with the brown cattle gleaming red in the light.

You leave the great world behind, with all its bustle, crowds, and express engines, when you get into the quiet little train that takes you leisurely up to Launceston, through woods, by the sides of rivers, over great valleys. There is a sense of repose about this railway journey. The train stops at any number of small stations—apparently to let the guard have a chat with the station-master—and then jogs on in a quiet, contented fashion. And on such an autumn day as this, that is a beautiful, still, rich-coloured, and English-looking country through which it passes. Here is a deep valley, all glittering with the dew and the sunlight. Down in the hollow a farm-yard is half hidden behind the yellowing elms; a boy is driving a flock of white geese along the twisting road; the hedges are red with the withering briers. Up here, along the hill-sides, the woods of scrub oak are glowing with every imaginable hue of gold, crimson, and bronze, except where a few dark firs appear, or where a tuft of broom, pure and bright in its green, stands out among the faded breckans. The gorse is profusely in bloom—it always is in Cornwall. Still further over there are sheep visible on the uplands; beyond these again the

bleak brown moors rise into peaks of hills; overhead the silent blue, and all around the sweet, fresh country air.

With a sharp whistle the small train darts into an opening in the hills; here we are in the twilight of a great wood. The tall trees are becoming bare; the ground is red with the fallen leaves; through the branches the blue-winged jay flies, screaming harshly; you can smell the damp and resinous odours of the ferns. Out again we get into the sunlight; and lo! a rushing, brawling, narrow stream, its clear flood swaying this way and that by the big stones; a wall of rock overhead crowned by glowing furze; a herd of red cattle sent scampering through the bright-green grass. Now we get slowly into a small white station, and catch a glimpse of a tiny town over in the valley; again we go on by wood and valley, by rocks, and streams, and farms. It is a pleasant drive on such a morning.

In one of the carriages in this train Master Harry Trelyon and his grandmother were seated. How he had ever persuaded her to go with him to Cornwall by train was mysterious enough; for the old lady thoroughly hated all such modern devices. It was her custom to go travelling all over the country with a big, old-fashioned phaeton and a pair of horses; and her chief amusement during these long excursions was driving up to any big house she took a fancy to, in order to see if there was a chance of its being let to her. The faithful old servant who attended her, and who was about as old as the coachman, had a great respect for his mistress; but sometimes he swore—inaudibly—when she ordered him to make the usual inquiry at the front-door of some noble lord's country residence, which he would as soon have thought of letting as of forfeiting his seat in the House of Peers or his hopes of heaven. But the carriage and horses were coming down all the same to Eglosilyn, to take her back again.

"Harry," she was saying at this moment, "the longer I look at you, the more positive I am that you are ill. I don't like your colour; you are thin, and careworn, and anxious. What is the matter with you?"

"Going to school again at twenty-one is hard work, grandmother," he said. "Don't you try it. But I don't think I'm particularly ill; few folks can keep a complexion like yours, grandmother."

"Yes," said the old lady, rather pleased, "many's the time they said that about me, that there wasn't much to complain of in my looks; and that's what a girl thinks of then, and sweethearts, and balls, and all the other men looking savage when she's dancing with any one of them. Well, well, Harry; and what is all this about you and the young lady your mother has made such a pet of? Oh, yes, I have my suspicions; and she's engaged to another man, isn't she? Your grandfather would have fought him, I'll be bound; but we live in a peaceable way now—well, well, no matter; but hasn't that got something to do with your glum looks, Harry?"

"I tell you, grandmother, I have been hard at work in London. You can't look very brilliant after a few months in London."

"And what keeps you in London at this time of the year?" said this plain-spoken old lady. "Your fancy about getting into the army? Nonsense, man; don't tell me such a tale as that. There's a woman in the case; a Trelyon never put himself so much about from any other cause. To stop in town at this time of the year! Why, your grandfather and your father, too, would have laughed to hear of it. I haven't had a brace of birds or a pheasant sent me since last autumn—not one. Come, sir, be frank with me. I'm an old woman, but I can hold my tongue."

"There's nothing to tell, grandmother," he said. "You just about hit it in that guess of yours—I suppose Juliott told you. Well, the girl is engaged to another man; and what more is to be said?"

"The man's in Jamaica?"

"Yes."

"Why are you going down to-day?"

"Only for a brief visit: I've been a long time away."

The old lady sat silent for some time. She had heard of the whole affair before; but she wished to have the rumour confirmed. And at first she was sorely troubled that her grandson should contemplate marrying the daughter of an innkeeper, however intelligent, amiable, and well-educated the young lady might be; but she knew the Trelyons pretty well, and knew that, if he had made up his mind to it, argument and remonstrance would be useless. Moreover, she had a great affection for this young man, and was strongly disposed to sympathise with any wish of his. She grew in time to have a great interest in Miss Wenna Rosewarne; at this moment the chief object of her visit was to make her acquaintance. She grew to pity young Trelyon in his disappointment, and was inclined to believe that the person in Jamaica was something of a public enemy. The fact was, her mere sympathy for her grandson would have converted her to a sympathy with the wildest project he could have formed.

"Dear, dear," she said, "what awkward things engagements are when they stand in your way. Shall I tell you the truth? I was just about as good as engaged to John Cholmondeley when I gave myself up to your grandfather—but there, when a girl's heart pulls her one way, and her promise pulls her another way, she needs to be a very firm-minded young woman, if she means to hold fast. John Cholmondeley was as good-hearted a young fellow as ever lived—yes, I will say that for him; and I was mightily sorry for him; but—but you see, that's how things come about. Dear, dear, that evening at Bath—I remember it as well as if it was yesterday—and it was only two months after I had run away with your grandfather. Yes, there was a ball that night; and we had kept very quiet, you know, after coming back; but this time your grandfather had set his heart on taking me out before everybody, and, you know, he had to have his way. As sure as I live, Harry, the first man I saw was John Cholmondeley, just as white as a ghost—they said he had been drinking hard and gambling pretty nearly the whole of these two months.

He wouldn't come near me. He wouldn't take the least notice of me. The whole night he pretended to be vastly gay and merry; he danced with everybody; but his eyes never came near me. Well, you know what a girl is—that vexed me a little bit; for there never was a man such a slave to a woman as he was to me—dear, dear, the way my father used to laugh at him, until he got wild with anger. Well, I went up to him at last, when he was by himself, and I said to him, just in a careless way, you know, 'John, aren't you going to dance with me to-night?' Well, do you know, his face got quite white again? and he said—I remember the very words, all as cold as ice—'Madam,' says he, 'I am glad to find that your hurried trip to Scotland has impaired neither your good looks nor your self-command.' Wasn't it cruel of him?—but then, poor fellow, he had been badly used, I admit that. Poor young fellow, he never did marry; and I don't believe he ever forgot me to his dying day. Many a time I'd like to have told him all about it; and how there was no use in my marrying him if I liked another man better; but though we met sometimes, especially when he came down about the Reform Bill time—and I do believe I made a red-hot Radical of him—he was always very proud, and I hadn't the heart to go back on the old story. But I'll tell you what your grandfather did for him—he got him returned at the very next election, and he on the other side too; and after a bit a man begins to think more about getting a seat in Parliament than about courting an empty-headed girl. I have met this Mr. Roscorla, haven't I?"

"Of course you have."

"A good-looking man rather, with a fresh complexion and grey hair?"

"I don't know what you mean by good looks," said Trelyon, shortly. "I shouldn't think people would call him an Adonis. But there's no accounting for tastes."

"Perhaps I may have been mistaken," the old lady said; "but there was a gentleman at Plymouth Station who seemed to be something like what I can recall of Mr. Roscorla—you didn't see him, I suppose."

"At Plymouth Station, grandmother?" the young man said, becoming rather uneasy.

"Yes. He got into the train just as we came up. A neatly-dressed man, grey hair, and a healthy-looking face—I must have seen him somewhere about here before."

"Roscorla is in Jamaica," said Trelyon, positively.

Just at this moment the train slowed into Launceston Station, and the people began to get out on the platform.

"That is the man I mean," said the old lady.

Trelyon turned and stared. There, sure enough, was Mr. Roscorla, looking not one whit different from the precise, elderly, fresh-coloured gentleman who had left Cornwall some seven months before.

"Good Lord, Harry," said the old lady, nervously looking at her grandson's face, "don't have a fight here!"

The next second Mr. Roscorla wheeled round, anxious about some luggage, and now it was his turn to stare in astonishment and anger—anger, because he had been told that Harry Trelyon never came near Cornwall, and his first sudden suspicion was that he had been deceived. All this had happened in a minute. Trelyon was the first to regain his self-command. He walked deliberately forward, held out his hand, and said—

“Hillo, Roscorla; back in England again? I didn’t know you were coming.”

“No,” said Mr. Roscorla, with his face grown just a trifle greyer, “no, I suppose not.”

In point of fact he had not informed any one of his coming. He had prepared a little surprise. The chief motive of his return was to get Wenna to cancel for ever that unlucky letter of release he had sent her, which he had done more or less successfully in subsequent correspondence; but he had also hoped to introduce a little romanticism into his meeting with her. He would enter Eglosilyan on foot. He would wander down to the rocks at the mouth of the harbour, on the chance of finding Wenna there. Might he not hear her humming to herself, as she sat and sewed, some snatch of “Your Polly has never been false, she declares”—or was that the very last ballad in the world she would now think of singing? Then the delight of regarding again the placid, bright face and earnest eyes, of securing once more a perfect understanding between them, and their glad return to the inn.

All this had been spoiled by the appearance of this young man: he loved him none the more for that.

“I suppose you haven’t got a trap waiting for you?” said Trelyon, with cold politeness. “I can drive you over, if you like.”

He could do no less than make the offer; the other had no alternative but to accept. Old Mrs. Trelyon heard this compact made with considerable dread.

Indeed, it was a dismal drive over to Eglosilyan, bright as the forenoon was. The old lady did her best to be courteous to Mr. Roscorla and cheerful with her grandson; but she was oppressed by the belief that it was only her presence that had so far restrained the two men from giving vent to the rage and jealousy that filled their hearts. The conversation kept up was singular.

“Are you going to remain in England long, Roscorla?” said the younger of the two men, making an unnecessary cut at one of the two horses he was driving.

“Don’t know yet. Perhaps I may.”

“Because,” said Trelyon, with angry impertinence, “I suppose if you do you’ll have to look round for a housekeeper.”

The insinuation was felt; and Roscorla’s eyes looked anything but pleasant as he answered—

“You forget I’ve got Mrs. Cornish to look after my house.”

“Oh, Mrs. Cornish is not much of a companion for you.”

"Men seldom want to make companions of their housekeepers," was the retort, uttered rather hotly.

"But sometimes they wish to have the two offices combined, for economy's sake."

At this juncture Mrs. Trelyon struck in, somewhat wildly, with a remark about an old ruined house, which seemed to have had at one time a private still inside: the danger was staved off for the moment.

"Harry," she said, "mind what you are about; the horses seem very fresh."

"Yes, they like a good run; I suspect they've had precious little to do since I left Cornwall."

Did she fear that the young man was determined to throw them into a ditch or down a precipice, with the wild desire of killing his rival at any cost? If she had known the whole state of affairs between them—the story of the emerald ring, for example—she would have understood at least the difficulty experienced by these two men in remaining decently civil towards each other.

So they passed over the high and wide moors, until far ahead they caught a glimpse of the blue plain of the sea. Mr. Roscorla relapsed into silence; he was becoming a trifle nervous. He was probably so occupied with anticipations of his meeting with Wenna that he failed to notice the objects around him—and one of these, now become visible, was a very handsome young lady, who was coming smartly along a wooded lane, carrying a basket of bright-coloured flowers.

"Why, here's Mabyn Rosewarne. I must wait for her."

Mabyn had seen at a distance Mrs. Trelyon's grey horses; she guessed that the young master had come back, and that he had brought some strangers with him. She did not like to be stared at by strangers. She came along the path, with her eyes fixed on the ground; she thought it impertinent of Harry Trelyon to wait to speak to her.

"Oh, Mabyn," he cried, "you must let me drive you home! And let me introduce you to my grandmother. There is some one else whom you know."

The young lady bowed to Mrs. Trelyon; then she stared, and changed colour somewhat, when she saw Mr. Roscorla; then she was helped up into a seat.

"How do you do, Mr. Trelyon?" she said. "I am very glad to see you have come back. How do you do, Mr. Roscorla?"

She shook hands with them both, but not quite in the same fashion.

"And you have sent no message that you were coming?" she said, looking her companion straight in the face.

"No—no, I did not," he said, angry and embarrassed by the open enmity of the girl. "I thought I should surprise you all ——"

"You have surprised me, any way," said Mabyn, "for how can you be so thoughtless? Wenna has been very ill—I tell you, she has been very ill indeed, though she has said little about it, and the least thing

upsets her. How can you think of frightening her so? Do you know what you are doing? I wish you would go away back to Launceston, or London, and write her a note there, if you are coming, instead of trying to frighten her!"

This was the language, it appeared to Mr. Roscorla, of a virago; only viragoes do not ordinarily have tears in their eyes, as was the case with Mabyn, when she finished her indignant appeal.

"Mr. Trelyon, do you think it is fair to go and frighten Wenna so?" she demanded.

"It is none of my business," Trelyon answered, with an air as if he had said to his rival, "Yes, go and kill the girl! You are a nice sort of gentleman, to come down from London to kill the girl!"

"This is absurd," said Mr. Roscorla, contemptuously, for he was stung into reprisal by the persecution of these two; "a girl isn't so easily frightened out of her wits. Why, she must have known that my coming home was at any time probable."

"I have no doubt she feared that it was," said Mabyn, partly to herself: for once she was afraid of speaking out.

Presently, however, a brighter light came over the girl's face.

"Why, I quite forgot," she said, addressing Harry Trelyon; "I quite forgot that Wenna was just going up to Trelyon Hall when I left. Of course, she will be up there. You will be able to tell her that Mr. Roscorla has arrived, won't you?"

The malice of this suggestion was so apparent that the young gentleman in front could not help grinning at it; fortunately, his face could not be seen by his rival. What *he* thought of the whole arrangement can only be imagined.

And so, as it happened, Mr. Roscorla and his friend Mabyn were dropped at the inn; while Harry Trelyon drove his grandmother up and on to the Hall.

"Well, Harry," the old lady said, "I am glad to be able to breathe at last; I thought you two were going to kill each other."

"There is no fear of that," the young man said; "that is not the way in which this affair has to be settled. It is entirely a matter for her decision—and look how everything is in his favour. I am not even allowed to say a word to her; and even if I could, he is a deal cleverer than me in argument. He would argue my head off in half-an-hour."

"But you don't turn a girl's heart round by argument, Harry. When a girl has to choose between a young lover and an elderly one, it isn't always good sense that directs her choice. Is Miss Wenna Rosewarne at all like her sister?"

"She's not such a tomboy," he said; "but she is quite as straightforward, and proud, and quick to tell you what is the right thing to do. There's no sort of shamming tolerated by these two girls. But then Wenna is gentler, and quieter, and more soft and loveable than Mabyn—in my fancy, you know; and she is more humorous and clever, so that

she never gets into those school-girl rages. But it is really a shame to compare them like that; and, indeed, if any one said the least thing against one of these girls, the other would precious soon make him regret the day he was born. You don't catch me doing that with either of them; I've had a warning already, when I hinted that Mabyn might probably manage to keep her husband in good order. And so she would, I believe, if the husband were not of the right sort; but when she is really fond of anybody, she becomes their slave out-and-out. There is nothing she wouldn't do for her sister; and her sister thinks there's nobody in the world like Mabyn. So you see ——"

He stopped in the middle of this sentence.

"Grandmother," he said, almost in a whisper, "here she is coming along the road."

"Miss Rosewarne?"

"Yes: shall I introduce you?"

"If you like."

Wenna was coming down the steep road, between the high hedges, with a small girl on each side of her, whom she was leading by the hand. She was gaily talking to them; you could hear the children laughing at what she said. Old Mrs. Trelyon came to the conclusion that this merry young lady, with the light and free step, the careless talk, and fresh colour in her face, was certainly not dying of any love-affair.

"Take the reins, grandmother, for a minute."

He had leapt down into the road, and was standing before her, almost ere she had time to recognize him. For a moment a quick gleam of gladness shone on her face; then, almost instinctively, she seemed to shrink from him, and she was reserved, distant, and formal.

He introduced her to the old lady, who said something nice to her about her sister. The young man was looking wistfully at her, troubled at heart that she treated him so coldly.

"I have got to break some news to you," he said; "perhaps you will consider it good news."

She looked up quickly.

"Nothing has happened to anybody—only some one has arrived. Mr. Roscorla is at the inn."

She did not flinch. He was vexed with her that she showed no sign of fear or dislike. On the contrary, she quickly said that she must then go down to the inn; and she bade them both good-by, in a placid and ordinary way; while he drove off, with dark thoughts crowding into his imagination of what might happen down at the inn during the next few days. He was angry with her, he scarcely knew why.

Meanwhile Wenna, apparently quite calm, went on down the road; but there was no more laughing in her voice, no more light in her face.

"Miss Wenna," said the smaller of the two children, who could not understand this change, and who looked up with big, wondering eyes, "why does oo tremble so?"

The Cost of Living.

COMPLAINTS about the increase in the cost of living have of late been rife in every quarter. In these complaints themselves, and in the various suggestions and appeals for relief which have been founded upon them, the fact of such a rise has been so generally assumed that any attempt to explain that it is in great part imaginary will seem to most persons simply paradoxical. Does not every mistress of a household, it will be urged, have, in details, the evidence of the fact brought to her mind in her morning interviews with her cook or housekeeper? And does not every master have the same evidence, in the aggregate, when the time comes to add up and discharge his Christmas bills? And where else is the explanation and justification to be sought for the Civil Service Stores, and their rapid and startling success? The matter is worth inquiring into. We are convinced that here, as in so many other cases, the popular mind has got hold of a few unquestionable facts, but has been rather too apt to turn aside from equally important groups of counterbalancing facts.

Discussions upon the subject have not as a rule, we apprehend, taken the most convenient and conclusive form. They have depended too much upon vague individual recollection of details, or hearsay, on the one hand, or upon appeals to statistical columns on the other hand. We are convinced, however, that the examination of concrete instances offers practically the only available plan. It is certainly the most interesting, and we hope to give sufficient reasons for establishing that it is the most trustworthy plan. Long lists of figures, containing the statistics of the rise and fall of various commodities are at best the mere elements of an inquiry, and need a considerable amount of dressing up before they can be of any service to us. The price alone is clearly not sufficient. We must also know the relative amount of each of the commodities which may happen to be consumed, so as to understand how far a saving in the one direction will neutralize a loss in another. But the moment this is done the inquiry really becomes a concrete and relative one, for the comparative amount of the various articles demanded for different households varies widely according to tastes and circumstances. In one family bread and meat will be the important items; in another, amusements, travel, and literature will be the main outlets of the income. Tastes and circumstances being various, expenses must be so likewise. Hence it seems to follow that if we wish to get at the facts in a simple and intelligible manner, we have really only two courses before us. One of these is to endeavour to construct a sort of fictitious person who shall represent the

average expenses of any given rank or position. We may assign him an average number of children, of average health and appetite, and credit the parents with a sort of average disposition and line of expenditure. As regards the simple wants and tastes of the agricultural labouring-classes, such a plan as this might answer. It has in fact been repeatedly adopted in their case with the result of establishing, conclusively we think, that even in spite of a rise of money wages their position is on the whole worse in some parts of the country than it was a generation ago. When, however, we attempt to apply the same method to the middle and upper classes, with their widely varying tastes and circumstances, it loses most of its interest and value. No one would feel his own case sufficiently nearly coincident with that of the fictitious individual to find much interest in carrying out the comparison.

A far better plan, therefore, seems to be to find some actual concrete case, that is, to take an instance of a family (if such can be found) which we happened to know occupied about the same social position, and possessed approximately similar tastes and means in two successive generations. What we may thus seem to lose in scientific accuracy will be more than made up in other ways. What we want to know is not the cost or wholesale price of things, which is what the statisticians are mostly concerned with, but the actual price which had to be paid by ordinary householders of common sagacity and opportunity. Moreover, by thus taking actual concrete instances, we are saved from much uncertainty and conjecture in the assignment of the supposed proportions in various directions which the outlay of our fictitious householder would assume.

We may remark that it was the accident of such an opportunity as this coming into our way that put us upon the present line of inquiry. We recently fell in with some tolerably full and accurate household books of from forty to fifty years ago, having the best possible grounds for knowing what was the cost of living for a similar family a generation further on. We will call the householders respectively father and son. They occupied the same social position in the upper, or upper middle class, whichever people may please to call it. Their incomes were not very different, say about 1,000*l.* a year. Their tastes also were somewhat similar. Both had decided literary sympathies, were fond of hospitality in a quiet way, and of travel, and were both fairly good domestic managers. As far as we can judge, therefore, each would want similar classes of articles and of about the same quality, and would be likely to get it at much about the same relative cost. The cases are also analogous in that neither of them lived either in London or in the heart of the country, but for the most part in country towns; so that that source of uncertainty is avoided which arises from the fact that formerly the difficulties of transit produced much greater differences than now exist between the price of some things in the metropolis and in the country.

Before giving some of our results in detail, there are one or two prevalent sources of confusion which require to be cleared up. Perhaps the

oddest, one might rather say the coolest assumption often made in discussions upon this subject, is one which really amounts to a claim that all loss arising from increase of cost is to be regarded as a privation, and therefore a ground for complaint, whereas all saving arising from diminution of cost in other directions may fairly be regarded as being swallowed up by the greater "demands" of the present age. Beef and butter are dearer, therefore here is a privation; but when it is urged on the other hand that travelling is vastly cheaper, the answer will very likely be, 'Oh! but people are obliged to travel so much more now than they used to do; every one does so now, even those who formerly never thought of such a thing, and therefore we, like others, are forced to do the same.' Still more is the same answer resorted to in the case of every sort of social display. It need hardly be remarked that every plea of this sort must be peremptorily rejected. All that we are concerned with is the simple question, Can I or can I not procure a larger supply than a man of my own means could, a generation or two ago, of the common necessities and luxuries of life? To turn aside to examine whether we get more or less pleasure out of these sources than people would formerly have done, is to enter upon a totally different question. If our physical frames actually required more sustenance now, that would be a fair set-off to any cheaper price in the materials; but if a man can adorn his walls with double the number of engravings or pictures that could have been procured for the same money fifty years ago, this is an unquestionable gain. For him to turn round and say that after all it comes to nothing, because society "demands" a greater show, is to miss the whole point in dispute. Of course the stomach must be fairly filled before our walls are decorated, but we are not discussing the case of the very poor, all whose earnings go to necessities, with the smallest margin left for luxuries. We are concerned with the case of the middle and upper classes, of whose expenditure, whether we choose to give it the name of luxury or not, a very large portion is spent on what are not necessities. "Life" with them is not a struggle for the means of existence, but a choice amongst many forms of amusement and relaxation. Unless therefore we take an absurdly narrow view of the matter, we must include under the term "cost of living," for any class, all that makes life enjoyable, as well as what makes it possible for them.

The fact is, that to put up such a plea as the above is to concede almost all that is needed. Society has no fixed claims whatever; it claims just as much as it can get. Men on an average live pretty nearly up to their income, or at any rate spend about the same proportion of it in one age and another. If then they are found to buy more of some article of enjoyment than they used to, it is a sign almost certainly of an increased income, but also not improbably of some fall in the price of the article in question. After a time they get accustomed to the enjoyment of it, regard it as essential to their rank or position, and grumble if they cannot have it, and the margin by which it was originally procured, as well. Every increase therefore in the demands of society often marks a decrease,

recent or of long standing, in the cost of living. It may of course have been attained by an increase of the average income, but it may also be due to a fall in the price of the article. People say, for instance, that dinner-giving is more expensive now, because every one expects champagne. But why do they expect it now? Our fathers liked the taste of it as much as we do, and would have been just as glad to drink it; but they could not afford it. This means that the son's income is on an average larger than the father's; but the claims and expectations of society are simply a consequence and sign of this gradual enrichment: they are not a product which goes on growing of its own accord. We shall therefore neglect all such considerations, and confine ourselves to the simple question, Will a given income in the middle and upper classes buy more or less of such things as they choose to lay it out in?

Another and rather perplexing question arises out of the fact that nearly all articles have of late years improved in quality, owing to increased knowledge or mechanical skill in their production. Indeed, in many cases this improvement has been so great as to have taken the form of the entire supersession of the old material or instrument by modern substitutes. In the case of scientific and manufacturing commodities this is too evident to need more than a passing allusion. Compare, *e.g.* the Moderator or Silber lamp with the best oil-lamps in existence forty years ago. The quality of the light now used in every little drawing-room is such as hardly a nobleman could then procure. In respect of the lighting of our streets, halls, and passages, the contrast is of course more striking still. So in every other direction. Modern linen is finer and whiter, modern paper smoother, steel pens (to most tastes) infinitely less vexing than quills.

We are quite aware that a contradictory belief circulates in some minds. Many people have a conviction that things are now made cheap and nasty in comparison with the excellence and solidity of old workmanship. It would take up too much space here to give the full grounds of our own conviction, but we have very little doubt that the fact is that in the case of almost every article those who really wish for excellence can get it as good or better than they ever could before; but that to suit the democratic taste of the day, and the consequent desire to secure a sort of outside equality in all ranks, showy articles of inferior durability are made as well; in other words, that the cheap and flimsy things, in so far as they are really more numerous, represent not so much a substitution for the good as a supplement to them. Hardly any one would deny that this is the case in jewellery, for instance, and we suspect that the same explanation is equally valid in almost every other direction. The common objection which consists in pointing to some stout, and probably ugly, old chair or cloak, and comparing it favourably with those in use now, is met by the simple reply that all the weak ones have been broken up or thrown away, so that none but the few strong ones are left. Of the generally rickety houses which the builders run up now-a-days about

London, who can tell but what a small remnant may be left a century hence which shall be pointed out as a favourable contrast to their latest successors?

This improvement in quality throws a difficulty in the way of our inquiry, for since we have not got the old articles to compare with the new, we are apt to forget how much cheaper the latter may often be at nominally the same price. It is of course impossible to estimate the value of such a saving as this with any approach to numerical accuracy, but clearly some account ought to be taken of it, for the object of life is not merely to get much, but also to get it good.

So again, to refer to a somewhat similar class of cases, there are many articles which simply were not procurable at all in former days; for instance, photographic likenesses. Any labourer can now procure for a shilling a more perfect likeness of a relative than the richest man could have purchased a generation ago. When the comparison is made between past and present cost, what account is to be taken of such things as these? It is clearly an advantage to have the power of procuring things which our fathers would have liked as much as we do, but which they had not the chance to get, but it is an advantage which cannot well be expressed numerically. The best we can do is to make a rough comparison with the superior articles of the class which most nearly took their place in former days.

So again with the saving which is made, not in money, but in time. A man can now go from London to York at about one-third the price which his father would have had to pay. But he can also do it with comparative comfort and safety, in all weathers and at all times of the year, in less than five hours, instead of requiring, as formerly, from twenty to thirty. The former advantage admits of accurate determination, but how are we to set about estimating the latter? Such considerations as these serve to remind us that any comparison between past and present cost of living must be at best a somewhat rough affair, not so much from the difficulty of procuring statistics, as from the difficulty, in fact impossibility, of deciding clearly the principles upon which they are to be applied in a large number of cases.

We will now give a glance at some of the facts. It will be best to divide the total outlay into four or five principal groups corresponding to the main classes of wants. The first of these corresponds to what are often called "household" expenses, viz. food and drink, and the necessities for procuring and dressing these. In their case, the comparison is for the most part very simple. Nearly every important article which we consume now was consumed forty years ago, and there has not been much difference in the quality during that interval. All that we have to do, therefore, is to make a comparative estimate of their values then and now. On the whole, there can be no doubt that they have risen, and risen considerably. Butchers' meat is about double what it was, and the same may be said of its occasional substitutes, such as game, fowls, rabbits, &c.

Butter is considerably more than double, and eggs and milk are also dearer. Bread, of course, fluctuates from year to year, but has shown no sign of any permanent fall since the repeal of the corn laws. Some things, no doubt, have fallen; sugar and coffee to some extent, and tea to between half and one-third of its former price. The lighter kinds of wine also have lately become a cheap drink; the choicer wines, on the other hand, remaining as they were, or becoming, like all scarce things, dearer. Of the innumerable remaining things supplied mostly by the grocer we cannot attempt to offer an estimate; some have risen, others fallen, but their aggregate alteration does not amount to very much. Coals are one of those commodities which vary in price with the locality; railway communication, however, has produced such an effect that even now, in the south of England, in spite of the late rise, they are cheaper than they were forty years ago. The father, in our comparison, had to pay in the neighbourhood of London in winter thirty-five shillings a ton for his coals; they could be delivered there even now for less than that; and three years ago could be bought for twenty-seven shillings. When we add up the gain and loss on all these various items, taking into account not only their price but their amount, we find, as might be expected, that the scale in which the butcher and his allies, the poulterer and dairyman, stand, shows a decided tendency to sink. This is readily understood when it is observed that the aggregate of these household expenses runs up to more than a fourth of the total income (in the son's case), and that of this aggregate, meat costs not much under one-third; viz. some 75*l.* out of 250*l.* We should not, perhaps, be far from the mark if we were to reckon the loss in this department at from 30*l.* to 50*l.*; that is to say, the son has to pay that annual sum extra in order to keep his table as well furnished as his father's.

We will next discuss that group of expenses which may be called educational. By this we mean, not merely school and college expenses, but all those which most directly concern mental enjoyment and improvement, such as books, newspapers, lectures, writing materials, and so on. We are here getting on to ground on which some of the sources of error already pointed out are especially likely to mislead. People are very apt merely to think of what they have to pay, and to neglect to consider the quality of what they get for their money. They complain of school charges being higher, but they fail to realise how vastly greater in proportion has been the improvement in the instruction given. Formerly, after a few great old schools had been named (and these with many drawbacks of antique prejudice and barbarous custom), it was quite a chance whether, in a small country grammar school, you got any return worth mentioning for your outlay. You might possibly get a good return, and you might get a bad one, and there were few opportunities of knowing beforehand which was the most likely. We strongly suspect that if any parent were content to put up with an article no better than his father got he might still procure it at the old cost by simply sending his boys to

cheap and inferior schools. But he chooses instead, very wisely, one of the now numerous large schools and colleges which in every respect, except social prestige, stand on the level of the old public schools. Much the same may be said of University expenses, though here the rise of price has been but little, great as has been the improvement in the instruction. The direct charges for teaching are not much more than they were. The rise in the indirect charges, for living, &c., fall into the same class as those for other persons; whilst in regard to the style of living we have already said all that is needed, and will therefore merely remark that when people on the whole choose to spend a great deal more than their fathers did, they are simply showing that their pockets are fuller, but are throwing no light upon the question whether the cost of living has increased. In regard to the universal instruments of mental improvement, books, papers, &c., the saving of cost is so gigantic that no one who thinks that these things are comparable with beef and mutton should venture to assert without careful inquiry that the total cost of living has risen at all. In respect of standard favourites, for instance, we have every range of cheapened production, from the novel of Walter Scott, which we procure at one sixty-third of the price which it cost our fathers, to the old classics, in which much of the improvement consists rather in the better paper and typography. In the case of newspapers again, the *Times*, for instance, has halved its price and doubled or trebled its size; whilst in respect of the infinite variety of other daily, weekly, and monthly journals, no comparison can be made, simply because one of the elements of such a comparison is entirely wanting. We now enjoy sources of information which simply could not be procured by any one, at any cost, forty years ago. Somewhat similar remarks apply to pictures. The great rise in the price of original works of art need not be noticed here, since this does not touch one man in ten thousand; but the cheapening effected in all kinds of copies by photography, chromolithography, and the numerous other substitutes for the old engraving process, opens sources of enjoyment to every one. The general expenditure under this head of education is of course very variable, and depends in amount and direction upon the accident of there being boys in a family, or of a son being trained for a learned profession. But we may safely say that the increased payment for schooling is not great, and is more than made up by the improvement in quality; whilst, in regard to literature, &c. we should be well within the mark in saying that half the old cost is saved, so that any man whose expenditure under this head is large, might be able to recoup himself here for his butcher's extortion, if he likes so to call it.

Another drain upon the purse is found in travelling expenses. These are of course just as much a part of the cost of living as anything else. It needs no great penetration to see that if one man spends 100*l.* in entertaining his friends in the course of the year, whilst another spends the same sum in taking his family to Switzerland, these are both ways of

enjoying life, and that, therefore, it would be the flimsiest of conventions to include one in the cost of living and to exclude the other. If the former finds that his income, in his own line of outlay, will not go as far by one-half, and the other finds that his goes further by the same amount, these are clearly to be regarded, on any broad and rational view of life, as compensating considerations to be set off the one against the other. The real difficulty in giving even the roughest numerical estimate here consists in the fact that so much of the pleasure derived from this source is not a mere cheapening of what was procurable before, but is the opening out of new satisfaction which could not possibly be attained formerly. A fortnight in Switzerland, we assume, is a better article than one in Wales. A banker's clerk can command the former easily with a three weeks' leave, whilst his father could scarcely have done more than go there and back within the time. Hotel expenses have of course increased abroad, but then the quality of the accommodation has risen too. If people were content now with such inns as their fathers put up at, and chose to go to those parts of the Alps where such inns only are to be found, they would discover that the difference between, say, many parts of the Tyrol now, and the Oberland or Chamouni then, is by no means great, and dwindles into insignificance in comparison with the cost of getting to such places. The only item belonging to this class which has greatly risen is, oddly enough, just the one which was commonly supposed forty years ago to be about to suffer a terrible depreciation, viz. horses. As between the families in question, we find that the father could get a horse to suit him well for 80*l.*, and was quite content with riding and driving horses at 25*l.*, and even 20*l.* The son never had the luck to be offered one of presumably equal value for less than from 40*l.* to 60*l.* This expense, however, is one that does not concern many people, nor those more than occasionally, so that travelling may safely be included amongst those items in the cost of living which have greatly decreased during a generation and a half. Those who may wish to make a comparison between the cost of travelling in England then and now will not be very far wrong in assuming that the outside places in a coach journey corresponded in price to the present first-class fares. At least this is almost exactly the proportion in some cases, and, therefore, is probably not far from the average. Posting, of course, was vastly more expensive. For occasional trips, a horse and gig did not cost very much less than it would now, for some reason or other; whereas a saddle horse was by comparison a very cheap luxury. It seems that at Cambridge, for instance, one could be procured for the best part of a day for three shillings, whereas now from seven to ten shillings would be the least sum that would be charged for the same.

When we come to house-rent we find, as we need not say, a considerable rise, but the amount of it is subject to many uncertainties, arising from change of fashion, accessibility, and the commercial progress of the particular neighbourhood. The father, we find, paid 80*l.* a year for his house. The son, for a somewhat larger and more convenient house, with

a smaller garden, paid 125*l.* The former, however, was considered rather low and the latter rather high for its neighbourhood ; the true difference, as regards rent alone, would probably have been more like 80*l.* Rates and taxes have of course risen ; but then here we get a *quid pro quo*, for most of the increase goes to pay for such things as drains, light, and police, luxuries that our fathers had mostly to do without.

Servants' wages, again, have risen, at least those of indoor servants, but to what precise amount is not easy to say, owing to variations in respect of what they are expected to find for themselves. We shall not be far from the mark, however, if we reckon that the housemaids have risen from about 10*l.* to 15*l.*, and the cooks, perhaps, from 10*l.* or 12*l.* to 18*l.* Outdoor servants have not apparently profited so much ; the father and son each paid his gardener about the same sum, viz., one guinea a week. On the whole, the total rise in this branch of expenditure (amounting to about 150*l.* a year) cannot be reckoned at more than 85*l.* or 40*l.*

The only remaining outlay of a regular and unavoidable kind seems to be dress. Here, where fashion reigns supreme, at least in the case of the ladies, we entirely abandon any attempt at figures. That they could dress cheaper if they pleased we have little doubt, owing to the smaller price of cotton and some other cheap goods. Moreover, the women in the poorer classes dress much more showily now, which cannot be more than very partially accounted for by increased incomes on their part. Men's clothing does not seem to have varied much. Some things, hats for instance, are decidedly cheaper. Those who would not now without compunction pay more than fourteen or sixteen shillings for the modern silk hat, could not have bought the old-fashioned "beaver" for less than twenty-six shillings ; and if we may judge by the frequency with which the entry occurs it would not appear that the latter had much more vitality in its constitution than the former. Some things, like gloves, are dearer ; but in the most costly part, viz., cloth garments, we cannot detect any difference worth taking into account.

We have now taken account of all the principal permanent sources of expense ; but besides these there is always a margin, and in households where the circumstances are easy a large margin, of occasional expenses. One year the house has to be painted or the carpenters have work to do ; another year a carriage is bought, or the garden altered or added to, or some kind of machine or implement is being constantly wanted. Most men have some kind of scientific, mechanical, or artistic hobby, and the gratification of these, or the procuring of presents for friends, often amounts in the aggregate to a considerable sum. These are far too variable things for us to try to take them individually into account. All we can say is that those which depend directly upon human labour, like house-repairs, have mostly risen considerably, owing to the rise in the workmen's wages ; whilst those which involve much machinery in their production, like most kinds of mechanical appliances, have shown a decided tendency

to fall. So these two conflicting influences may to some extent be set off one against another. Amongst the most important of these occasional expenses is furniture. Almost every one has to furnish a house completely at least once during his life, and a year seldom passes without his having also either to replace some old articles or buy some new ones. The outlay, therefore, even if converted into an annual equivalent, will be by no means inconsiderable. We have made the best comparison we can, and conclude that there has been on the whole a considerable saving in this direction. Few things have risen here, and some have fallen very considerably. Amongst the latter, iron and glass are, as might have been expected, prominent. We find that 30*l.* was paid for a drawing-room mirror, whilst one as good in every respect could not now, at the outside, cost more than 10*l.* Fire-grates and other metal articles seem to have been nearly double their present value. In ordinary wooden furniture we do not notice much difference. Carpets are cheaper; a good Brussels carpet costing five-and-threepence a yard against the present four-and-sixpence or thereabouts.

On a general review of the whole case, we may say that the three main classes of universal necessities, viz. food, house accommodation, and servants' wages, have all risen considerably; whilst the fourth, viz. clothes, may be regarded as but little altered. These comprise, of course, a large proportion of every one's income (we find, by a rough estimate, that in one of the cases under discussion, they amounted to about two-thirds of the total income), and the total loss upon them is not inconsiderable; according to the conjectures we have hazarded, this loss might, perhaps, come altogether to from 50*l.* to 80*l.*, or even 100*l.* On the other hand, of the three occasional and less necessary expenses, viz. culture, travel, and what we have left under the head of miscellaneous, the first two show a vast diminution of cost.

Whether the saving under this head will suffice to make up for the loss under the other depends of course upon the circumstances of the individual case. It is easy to see what these circumstances are. Those whose incomes are but moderate, or who have large families, for instance struggling professional men, will find, of course, that the necessary expenses make up a very large proportion of the whole. They will, therefore, suffer by the rise of prices in these things, that is to say, they will not find that a given annual income will procure them as many and as good things as it would procure their fathers. On the other hand, men with large incomes, and small families, will find that in such things as travelling and the various forms of mental gratification, they have a large and in some cases more than ample opportunity of indemnifying themselves. The person who is best off of all is the literary bachelor. His losses are but very small; much of what the butcher has put on, the tea-dealer and tobacconist have probably taken off; whilst in nine out of ten of the things which he wants to purchase he will find a saving, sometimes small, often considerable, and in some cases enormous.

The Marriage of Moira Fergus.

CHAPTER I.

MOIRA SEEKS THE MINISTER.

It was a grey day ; the skies were clouded over ; the Atlantic was sea-green and rough ; the rocky islands along the coast looked black in the driving sea. A young girl, with her shawl wrapped round her head and shoulders, had come all the way across the island of Darroch to the Free Church Manse on the western side, and now she timidly tapped at the door. She was a quiet little Highland girl, not very pretty, perhaps ; she was fair, freckled, and wistful of face ; but she had a certain innocence and "strangeness" in her blue eyes that pleased people. Her name was Moira Fergus—Moireach Fearghus some would have spelt it ; and she was the eldest of a family of five, who all lived on the eastern shores of Darroch with their father, John Fergus.

She tapped at the door, and a stalwart middle-aged woman answered.

"Ay, iss it you, Moira, that I see here this day ? and what will you be wanting to say to the minister ?"

The girl seemed frightened ; but at last she managed to say that she wanted to see the minister alone. The Highland woman regarded her with some suspicion ; but at length asked her to come in and sit down in the small parlour while she would go for Mr. MacDonald. The girl went into the room ; and somewhat nervously sat down on one of the chairs. For several minutes she remained there alone, looking in an absent way at the big shells on the mantelpiece, and listening vaguely to the roar of the sea outside.

Then Mr. MacDonald appeared—a small, thin, red-faced Celt, not very careful as to dress, and obviously partial to snuff.

"Kott pless me—and you, too, Moira Fergus," said he. "And it wass no thought of seeing you that I had this tay. And wass there anything wrong now with your father, that you hef come all the way from Ardhilleach ?"

"No, Mr. MacDonald, there iss not anything the matter with my father," said the girl, nervously working with the corner of her shawl. "There iss not anything the matter with my father,—but—but—you know, Mr. MacDonald, that it iss not every one that can get a smooth word from my father."

"A smooth word ?" said the minister. "And indeed it iss your father, Moira, that iss the angriest man in all the islands, and there iss no sort of holding of his tongue. There are other men—ay, there are other

men—who will be loose of their tongues on the week-days, and they will speak of the tefle without much heed of it—and what iss the harm, too, if you will tam the tefle when you speak of him? and it will come to him all in good time; but to tam other people, and on the Sabbath, too, that iss a ferry tifferent matter. The tefle—well, he is tammed whateffer; but how can you know that Mr. Ross of Styornoway, or Mr. Macleod of Harris, iss in the black books? But I will say no harm of your father, Moira Fergus."

And, indeed, Mr. MacDonald had some cause to be silent; for—always excepting on Sundays, when he proved himself a most earnest and faithful shepherd—he was himself given to the use of strong language and a little strong drink. He was none the less respected by his flock that occasionally he worked himself into a passion and uttered phrases that would have driven the Free Church Synod into fits. On the Sundays, however, he always had a clean shirt, would touch no whiskey, and made use of no vehement language—unless that vehemence appeared in his Gaelic sermons, which were of the best of their kind.

"Oh, Mr. MacDonald," the girl suddenly cried out, with a strange pleading in her eyes, "you will be a frient to me, and I will tell you why I hef come all the way from Ardtilleach. It wass Angus M'Eachran and me—you know Angus M'Eachran, Mr. MacDonald?—it wass Angus McEachran and me—well, we were thinking of getting married—ay, it iss many a day since he hass talked of that——"

"Well, well, Moira, and what more? Is there any harm in it that a young man and a young lass should think of getting married?"

The girl still kept nervously twitching the corner of her shawl.

"And there iss many a time I hef said to him, 'Angus, we will get married some day; but what for should we get married now, and the fish-ing not very good whateffer?' And there iss many a time he hass said to me, 'Moira, you hef done enough for your father and your father's children, and if he will not let you marry, do you think, then, that you will neffer marry?'"

"Your younger sisters must be growing up, Moira," the minister said.

"And the days went by," the girl continued, sadly, "and the weeks went by, and Angus M'Eachran he wass ferry angry with me many a time, and many a time I hef said to him, 'Angus, you will be doing petter if you will go away and get some other young lass to be your wife, for it will be a bad tay the tay that I quarrel with my own people to come to you and be your wife.' And it iss many the night I hef cried about it—from the night to the morning; and it wass many a time I will wish that I had neffer seen him, and that he had neffer come down from the Lewis, the year that the herring came round about Darroch and Killeena. And now—and now——"

Well, the girl burst into tears at this point; and the minister, not knowing very well what to do, brought out a bottle of whiskey, and said—

"Now, Moira, be a good lass, and do not cry ass if you wass without friends in the world. What iss it now that iss the matter?"

"Well, Mr. MacDonald," the girl said, between her sobs, "it wass five days or four days ago that Angus came to me, and he said to me, 'Moira, it iss no more any use the trying to get married in Darroch, for your father he iss a violent man, and he will not hear of it; and what we hef to do is to go away from Darroch, you and me together, and when the wedding iss all over, then you can come back and tell your people.'"

"That wass not well spoken," said the minister. "It iss a bad day for a young lass when she hass to run away from her own people."

He wass beginning to see the cause of the trouble that wass visible on the fair young face.

"And I said to him," continued the girl, struggling to restrain her tears, "I said to him, 'It iss a hard thing that you ask, Angus M'Eachran, but it iss many a long day and many a long month you hef waited for me to marry you, as I said I would marry you; and if it iss so that there will be no chance of our getting married in Darroch, I will go away with you.' Then he said, 'Moira, I will find out about a poat going up to the Lewis, and if they will put us ashore at Borvabost, or Barvas, or Callernish, we will walk across the island to Styornoway, and there we will get the poat to tek us to Glassgow.'"

"To Glassgow!" cried the minister. "Wass you thinking of going to Glassgow, Moira Fergus?"

The girl looked rather abashed.

"And you do not know what an ahfu' place is Glassgow—ay, indeed, an ahfu' place," said the minister, earnestly. "No, you do not know—but I hef been more ass three times or two times in Glassgow—and for a young lass to go there! You do not know, Moira Fergus, that it iss filled, every street of it, with wild men that hef no more care for the Sabbath-day ass if it wass Tuesday, ay, or even Monday—and the sodgers there—and the Roman Catholics—and no like the Catholics that you will see, one of them, or two of them, about Lochaber, where they are ferry like good, plain, other people—but it iss the *Roman* Catholics, Moira—it iss the real *Roman* Catholics, Moira—you will find in Glassgow, and they are ferry wild men, and if they were to rise against the town in the night-time, it would be the Lord's own mercy if they did not burn every person in his bed. Indeed, indeed, Moira Fergus, you must not go to Glassgow!"

"And I do not want to go to Glassgow!" Moira said, excitedly, "that iss what I hef come to you about this tay, Mr. MacDonald. I hef a great fear of going to Glassgow, and I wass saying to myself that it wass you, Mr. MacDonald, that maybe could help me—and if you wass to see Angus M'Eachran——"

"But if I wass to see your father, Moira Fergus—there iss no man so mad ass not to know that a young lass will be thinking of getting married."

"That will be of no use whateffer, Mr. MacDonald. It iss a ferry angry man he is, and if there iss any more word of the marriage I will be afraid to go back to Ardtilleach."

"Then the tefle—and tam him!—hass got into his head!" said the minister, with a furious blow on the table. "It iss no patience I hef with a foolish man!"

Moira was rather frightened, but she said in a low voice—

"Ay, ay, it iss a ferry angry man he is; and there iss no use going to him, Mr. MacDonald; but this iss what I wass thinking, Mr. MacDonald, if you wass being so kind ass to go to Angus M'Eachran, and tell him that it iss not a good thing for us to go away to Glassgow. I hef given my word to him—yes, and I will not draw back from that—but now I hef a great fear of going to Glassgow——"

The minister was during this time shifting rather uneasily from the table to the window and from the window to the table. He was evidently much excited: he seemed scarcely to hear what the girl was saying. At last he suddenly interrupted her.

"Listen to me, Moira Fergus. It iss no business of mine—no, it iss not any business of mine—as a micister, to interfere in the family affairs of any one whateffer; and you had no right to come to the minister and ask him to go and speak to Angus M'Eachran. No, you had no right; and yet I will say this, Moira Fergus, that you had a ferry good right—ay, the tefle is in it if you had not a ferry good right. For I am a natif of this island—well, it wass in Harris I wass born, but what iss the use of being ferry particular?—and I am a natif of this island as well as a minister, and I hef known your family for a great many years, and I hef known you to be a good lass—and—and this iss what I wass going to say to you that, before I will see you going away to Glassgow, I will marry you and Angus M'Eachran myself, ay, so that no one shall know of it until it is all ferry well offer. And what do you say to that, Moira Fergus?"

The girl started, flushed, and then looked timidly down.

"It iss a ferry good man you are, Mr. MacDonald," she said, hesitatingly, "and a ferry good friend you hef always been to me—but—but it iss not for me to say that I hef come to ask you to marry us; and it is Angus M'Eachran, Mr. MacDonald, and not me, that hass to say 'yes' or 'no' to that."

"Ay, ay!" said the minister, cheerfully and courageously, "it is no fault for a young lass to be shy; and it iss right what you hef said, Moira, that I will speak to Angus M'Eachran. And there iss another I will speak to apout it, for it iss no trifling matter, Moira, and I will hef to see that we are sure and safe in what hass to be done; and you know that there iss not any one about the islands that hass trafelled so far ass Mr. Mackenzie, of Borva; and it iss a great many things he will know, and I think I will go and say a word to him, Moira."

"It iss a long way the way to Borva, Mr. MacDonald."

"Well, I wass told by Alistair Lewis that the men of the *Nighean-dubh* were coming up from Taransay about one o'clock or twelve o'clock tomorrow's morning, and if it iss not ferry pad weather they will go on to Loch Roag, so I think I will go with the *Nighean-dubh*. Now, you will

go back to Ardtilleach, Moira Fergus, and you will say not a word to any one until the time wass come I will be speaking myself to Angus M'Eachran; and now you will tak a tram, Moira, for it iss a ferry coorse sort o' day, and a healthy young lass will hef no harm from a trop of good whiskey."

"You are ferry kind, Mr. MacDonald, but I do not touch the whiskey."

"No? Then I will hef a drop myself, to wish you good luck, Moira; and when I come back from Borvabost, then I will tell you what Mr. Mackenzie says, and you will keep up your spirits, Moira, and you will find no need to go away from your own people to be married in Glassgow."

When Moira Fergus went outside, a new light seemed to fill the world. Certainly the sea was green and rough, and there were huge white breakers heaving over on the black rocks. But it seemed to her that there was a sort of sunshine in the green of the sea; and she had a consciousness of sunshine being behind the grey clouds overhead; and the dull brown moorland—mile after mile of it, in low undulation—was less lonely than when she had crossed it an hour before. And that red-faced irascible little minister, who lived by himself in the solitary manse out by the sea, and who was just a trifle too fond of whiskey and fierce language during six days of the week, was to her as a bright angel come down from heaven with promises of help, so that the girl, as she thought of the future, did not know whether to laugh or to cry for joy.

CHAPTER II.

A VISIT TO GREAT PEOPLE.

"THE tefle—and tam him!—is in the carelessness of you, Alister-nan-Each!" cried the minister, catching up his coat-tails. "What for will you knock your fish against my coat, and me going up to see Mr. Mackenzie and his daughter, that iss ass good ass an English lady now?"

Alister made a humble apology to the minister, and took his own bonnet to remove any lingering traces of the *Nighean-dubh* from the minister's costume, and then Mr. MacDonald got ashore at Borvabost. He had a word or two to say to some of the people whom he knew; then he went up and over the hill to the house of a certain Mr. Mackenzie, who was called by some folks the "King of Borva."

"And iss Mr. Mackenzie in the house, Mairi?" said he to the young girl who came to the passage—the doors in this part of the world are kept shut against rain, but never against strangers.

"No," said she, "Mr. MacDonald, he iss not in Borva at all, but away over at Styornoway, and it is ferry sorry he will be that you hef come to Borva and him away from his own house. But there iss Miss Sheila, she

will be down at her own house ; and she will be ferry ill pleased that you will come to Borva if you will not call at her house."

"Oh, I will call at her house ; and it is ferry glad I am that she hass not gone away ass yet ; and I am glad to see that you are still with Mr. Mackenzie, Mairi."

The old minister, grumbling over his disappointment, set out once more, and walked away across the moorland and down to a plateau over a quiet bay, where there was a large stone house built, with a verandah and a flower-garden in front. He saw there a young lady watering the tree-fuchsias—a handsome healthily-complexioned young woman, with dark hair, and deep blue eyes, who was the daughter of Mr. Mackenzie. She was rather well liked by the islanders, who generally called her "Miss Sheila," notwithstanding that she was married ; although some of them had got into a shy, half-comical, half-tender fashion of calling her "Princess Sheila," merely because her husband had a yacht so named.

"And are you ferry well ?" said she, running forward, with a bright smile on her face, to the minister. "And hef you come all the way from Darroch, Mr. MacDonald ?"

"Ay, ay," said the minister, a little embarrassed, and looking down, "I hef come from Darroch ; and it iss a proud tay this tay that I will shake hands with you, Miss — Mrs. Laffenter ; and it iss ferry glad I am that I will come to Borva, although your father is not here, for it iss not effery time in the year that a stranger will see you, Mrs. Laffenter."

"Oh, but you are no stranger, Mr. MacDonald," said this Mrs. Lavender. "Now come into the house, and I will ask you to stay and have some dinner with us, Mr. MacDonald, for you cannot leave for Darroch again to-night. And what did you want to see my father about, Mr. MacDonald ?"

He followed her into the house, and sat down in a spacious sitting-room, the like of which, in its wonderful colours and decorations, he had never seen before. He could compare it only with Stornoway Castle, or his dreams of the palace in which the Queen lived in London.

Well, he told all the story of Moira Fergus and Angus McEachran to Mrs. Lavender, and said that he had come to ask the advice of her father, who was a man who had travelled much and amassed knowledge.

"Surely you yourself are the best judge," said the handsome young wife. "They have lived long enough in the parish, hef they not, Mr. MacDonald ?"

"Oh, that iss not it—that iss not the matter at all, Mrs. Laffenter !" said he, emphatically. "I can marry them—oh, yes, I know I can marry them—in my own house, if I like. But it iss the prudence—it iss the prudence, Mrs. Laffenter—of it that iss in the question ; and I am not sure of the prudence of it."

"Then I must ask my husband," said Sheila.

She went to the open window, took a whistle from her pocket, and blew a note loud and shrill that seemed to go echoing far across Loch

Roag, away amid the blue and misty solitudes of the great Suainabhal. She stood there for a minute or two. Far below her there was a schooner yacht resting quietly in the bay; she could see a small boat put off, and land on the shore a man and a very tiny boy. The man was clad in rough blue homespun; he set the child of three or so on his shoulder, and then proceeded to climb the hill. In a few minutes there was the sound of some one on the gravel outside, and presently a tall young man, somewhat heavily bearded, marched into the drawing-room, and threw the child into its mother's outstretched arms.

"Mr. MacDonald of Darroch?" he cried. "Why, of course! And haven't you got such a thing as a glass of whiskey in the house, Sheila, when a visitor comes all the way from Darroch to see you? And what's the best of your news, Mr. MacDonald?"

Sheila—or Mrs. Lavender, as one ought to call her—having deposited the very young gentleman on the sofa, and given him a mighty piece of cake to console him for maternal neglect, proceeded to tell her husband of the causes of Mr. MacDonald's visit. His decision on the point was quickly taken.

"You'll get yourself into trouble, Mr. Macdonald, if you help them to a clandestine marriage. I wouldn't touch it, if I were you."

"Yes, I am afraid you will get yourself into trouble," said Sheila, with an air of wisdom.

"But, Kott pless me!" said the minister, indignantly, "hef I not told you they will run away to Glassgow?—and iss there anything ass bad ass that—that a young lad and a young lass will go away to Glassgow, and not one of them married until they get there?"

"Well, there's something in that," said Mr. Lavender. "What sort of fellow is this Angus M'Eachran?"

"Oh, he is a ferry tiligent young man—he hass a share in the poat, and he hass some money in the pank, and there iss none more cleffer than he is at the fishing. Ay, ay, he is a cleffer young man, and a good-looking young man; but if he wass not so free with his laugh, and his joke, and his glass—well, I will say nothing against the young man, who is a ferry respectable young man whateffer, and there iss no reason why John Fergus should shut the door against him."

"Then can't the father be talked over?" said Mr. Lavender, pretending to snatch at the cake which his son was busily eating.

"Oh, couldn't I say something to him!" Sheila said, with entreaty in her eyes.

"You, Miss—Mrs. Laffenter!" said the minister, with surprise. "You, to go into John Fergus's house! Yes, indeed, it would be a proud day the day for him that you went into his house—ay, if he wass fifteen or a dozen John Ferguses. But you hef no imagination of that man's temper—and the sweerin of him! —"

"Oh, I should stop that," said Mr. Lavender. "If you like to go and talk to him, Sheila, I will undertake that he shan't swear much!"

"How could you know?" the girl said, with a laugh. "He would swear in the Gaelic. But if there is no other means, Mr. MacDonald, I am sure anything is better than letting them run away to Glasgow."

"Sheila," said the husband, "when do we go to London?"

"In about a week now we shall be ready, I think," she said.

"Well, look here. You seem interested in that girl—I don't remember her having been here at all. However, suppose we put off our going to London, and see these young folks through their troubles?"

Of course he saw by her face that that was what she wanted: he had no sooner suggested such a thing than the happiest light possible sprang to her eyes.

"Oh, will you?" she cried.

"And in for a penny, in for a pound," said he. "I suppose you want witnesses, Mr. MacDonald? What if my wife and myself went round in the yacht to Darroch, and helped you at your private wedding?"

"Hey!" said Mr. MacDonald, with his eyes staring. "You, Sir, come to the wedding of Moira Fergus? And Miss Sheila, too? Why, there iss no man in all the islands would not gif away his daughter—ay, twenty daughters—if he wass told you will be coming to the wedding—not any man but John Fergus; and there is the anger of the teflle himself in the nature of John Fergus; and it iss no man will go near him."

"But I will go near him!" said Sheila, proudly, "and he will speak no rough speech to me."

"Not if I can understand him, and there is a door handy," said her husband, with a laugh.

"Ay, ay, you will come to the wedding?" said the minister, almost to himself, as if this assurance were almost too much for mortal man to bear. He had made a long and disagreeable voyage from the one island to the other, in order to seek the advice of a capable man; but he had not expected such high and honourable sanction of his secret aims. Now, indeed, he had no more hesitation. Mr. Mackenzie was a wise man, and a travelled man, no doubt; but not even his counsel could have satisfied the old minister as did the prompt and somewhat reckless tender of aid on the part of Mr. Lavender, and the frank and hearty sympathy of the beautiful "Princess Sheila."

CHAPTER III.

A MEETING OF LOVERS.

A still, calm night lay over the scattered islands; there was no sound abroad but the occasional calling of the wild-fowl; in the perfect silence there was scarcely even a murmur from the smooth sea. Night as it was, the world was all lit up with a wonderful white glory; for the moon down there in the south was almost full; and here the clear

radiance fell on the dark moorland flats, on the bays of white sand fronting the sea, and on the promontories of black rock that jutted out into the shining water. Killeena lay cold and silent under the wan glare; Darroch showed no signs of life; the far mountains of the larger islands seemed visionary and strange. It was a night of wonderful beauty, but that the unusual silence of the sea had something awful in it; one had a sense that the mighty plain of water was perhaps stealthily rising to cover for ever those bits of rock which, during a few brief centuries, had afforded foothold to a handful of human beings.

Down in one of the numerous creeks a young man was idly walking this way and that along the smooth sand—occasionally looking up to the rocks above him. This was Angus M'Eachran, the lover of Moira Fergus. There was obviously nothing Celtic about the young man's outward appearance: he was clearly of the race descended from the early Norwegian settlers in these islands—a race that, in some parts, has, notwithstanding intermarriage, preserved very distinct characteristics. He was a tall young fellow, broad-chested, yellow-bearded, good-looking enough, and grave and deliberate of speech. Moreover, he was a hard-working, energetic, shrewd-headed youth; there was no better fisherman round these coasts; he had earned his share in the boat, so that he was not at the mercy of any of the curers; he had talked of building a small stone cottage for himself; and it was said that he had a little money in the bank at Stornoway. But if Angus M'Eachran was outwardly a Norseman, he had many of the characteristics of the Celtic temperament. He was quick to imagine and resent affront. His seeming gravity of demeanour would, under provocation of circumstances, disappear altogether; and there was no one madder than he in the enjoyment of a frolic, no one more generous in a fit of enthusiasm, no one more reckless in the prosecution of a quarrel. They said he sometimes took a glass too much on shore—led away by the delight of good-fellowship; but the bitterest cold night, the most persistent rain, the most exhausting work, could not tempt him to touch a drop of whiskey when he was out at the fishing.

A young girl, shawled over, came over the rocks, and made her way down to the sands.

"You are ferry late, Moira," said he. "I was thinking you wass not coming at all the night."

"It iss not an easy thing for me to get away, and that no one will know," said she, timidly.

"Ay, ay, and that iss the worst of it!" said he, bitterly. "It is no ferry good thing that you will hef to come away from the house like that, as if you wass a thief; and if it wass any other young lass, she would not hef suffered that so long; and now, Moira, this is what I hef to say to you—that you must do what you hef promised to do, and when we go to Glasgow——"

"Oh, Angus!" she said; "it iss not to Glasgow I can go——"

Even in the pale moon light she could see the quick look of surprise, and anger, and jealousy that leapt to his eyes.

"And you will not go to Glassgow?" said he.

"Angus!" the girl said. "It iss ferry much I hef to say to you, and you will not be angry with me until I tell you. And it wass yesterday I went ofer to Mr. MacDonald, and I wass saying to him that there wass no more use in trying to speak to my father, and that you and me, Angus, we were thinking of going away to Glassgow——"

"And it iss a foolish lass you are!" he said, impetuously, "and now he will come ofer to Ardtilleach——"

"He will not think of coming ofer to Ardtilleach; it iss a ferry kind man that Mr. MacDonald is; and he will say to me, 'Moira, will it not be petter, and a great deal petter, that I will marry Angus M'Eachran and you in Darroch, and no one will know until it iss over, and then you can go and tell your father?'"

"Ay, did he say that?" exclaimed the young man, with his eyes wide.

"Indeed he did."

"Ay, ay, and it iss a ferry good man he iss whateffer," said Angus, with a sudden change of mood. "And you, Moira, what wass it you will say to him?"

"Me?"

"Ay, you."

"Well," said the girl, looking down, but with some pride in her tone; "it iss not for a young lass to say yes or to say no about such a thing—it iss for you, Angus, to go to the minister. But this is what I hef said to him, that the going to Glassgow wass a great trouble to me—ay, and a ferry great trouble——"

"Then I will go and see Mr. MacDonald!" said Angus, hastily. "And this iss what I will say to him—that he iss a ferry good man, and that before three weeks iss over, ay, or two weeks, or four weeks, I will send to him a gallon of whiskey the like of which he will not find from the Butt of Lewis down to Barra Head. Ay, Moira, and so you went all the way across the island yesterday? It iss a good lass you are; and you will be ferry much petter when you are married and in your own house, and away from your father, that hass no petter words for his own children ass if they wass swines. And it iss ferry early the morn's mornin' that I will go over to Mr. MacDonald——"

"But you need not do that, Angus," the girl said, "for Mr. MacDonald has gone away to Borva, to ask the advice of Mr. Mackenzie. Yes, it is a great teal that Mr. MacDonald is doing for us."

"It will be the good whiskey he will hef from me!" muttered Angus to himself.

"And now, Angus, I will be going back, for my father he thinks I hef only gone over to get a candle from Mrs. M'Lachlan; and you will say nothing about all that I hef told you, only you will go ofer to

Mr. MacDonald, Angus, on Saturday or Friday, and you will speak to him. And I will say good-night to you, Angus."

"I will go with you, Moira, along a bit of the road."

"No, Angus," the girl said, anxiously; "if there was any one will see us and will take the story to my father——"

She had no need to complete the sentence. Her companion laughed lightly and courageously as he took her hand.

"Ay, ay, Moira, it iss not always that you will hef to be afrait. And the story they will hef to take to your father, that will be a ferry goot story, that will be the ferry best story he will ever hear. Oh yes, he will say three words or two words to efferypody around him when he hears that tefle of a story."

If Angus was inclined to make light of the old man's probable rage, his sweetheart was not. The mere mention of it seemed to increase her desire to depart; and so he kissed her, and she went on her way home.

Perhaps he would have grumbled at the shortness of the interview but that this new project had almost taken his breath away, and now wholly occupied his mind. He clambered up the rocks, got across to the road, and slowly walked along in the clear moonlight, in the direction of the cottages of Ardtilleach. To have a lover's meeting cut short on such a night would have been grievous under other circumstances; but that was forgotten in the suggestion that his marriage of Moira Fergus had now become possible and near.

Angus M'Eachran had never been to Glasgow, and he had the vague fear of the place which dwells in the minds of many islanders. The project of flight thither was a last and desperate resource after all hope of conciliating John Fergus was abandoned. But the young man had never felt so confident about it as he pretended to be in speaking to Moira Fergus. He knew nothing of how the people lived in Glasgow; of the possibility of two strangers getting married; of the cost of the long journey. Then he might have to leave his fishing for an indefinite period, and embarrass his comrades in the boat; he had a suspicion, too, that old John Fergus, having been robbed of his daughter, would appeal to the sheriff, and impound the money which he, Angus M'Eachran, had in the bank at Stornoway.

It was with great joy, therefore, that he heard of this proposal. It seemed so much more fitting and proper for a man and a woman to get married in their own island. There would be no stain on the fair name of Moira Fergus, if she was married by Mr. MacDonald himself; whereas no one knew anything about the character of the Glasgow c'ergymen, who might, for all one knew, be secretly Roman Catholics. And then there was the remote chance that the wedding would have the august approval of the far-known Mr. Mackenzie, the King of Borva; which would silence the most censorious old hag who ever croaked over a peat-fire.

Angus M'Eachran reached the long and straggling line of hovels and

cottages known as the fishing hamlet of Ardtilleach. Down there, on the white shores of the small creek, several of the boats were drawn up, their hulls black in the moonlight. Up on the rocks above were built the two long and substantial curing-houses, with plenty of empty barrels lying round the doors. There was scarcely any one about, though here and there the smoke from a chimney showed that the peats were being stirred within to light up the gloomy interior of the hut. He passed the rude little cottage in which John Fergus and his family lived.

"Ay, ay, Moira," he was thinking to himself, "you will have a better house to live in by-and-by, and you will have better treatment in the house, and you will be the mistress of the house. And there will no one then say a hard word to you, whether he is your father or whether he is not your father; and I will make it a bad day for any one that says a hard word to you, Moira Fergus."

CHAPTER IV.

THE GOOD NEWS.

ANGUS M'EACHRAN hung his head in a sheepish fashion when he stood before the minister. The stalwart, yellow-bearded young fisherman found it was not an easy thing to have to speak about marriage; and the proposal to give Mr. MacDonald a gallon of the best whiskey had gone clean out of his head—banished, perhaps, by an instinctive reverence for spiritual authority. The little red-faced minister regarded him sternly.

"It wass not well done of you, Angus M'Eachran," said he, "to think of running away to Glassgow with John Fergus's daughter."

"And whose fault wass that, Mr. MacDonald?" said the fisherman. "It wass the fault of John Fergus himself."

"Ay, ay, but you would hef made bad things worse. Why to Glassgow! Do you know what Glassgow is? No, you do not know; but you would hef found out what it iss to go to Glassgow! It wass a ferry goot thing that Moira Fergus had the goot sense to come ofer to me; and now, ass I tell you, we will try to satisfy effery one if you will come ofer on the Wednesday morning."

"It wass ferry kind of you, Mr. MacDonald, to go all the way to Borva to ask apout the marriage; I will neffer forget that, neffer at all. And I will tell you this, Mr. MacDonald, that it wass no great wish I offer had for the going to Glassgow; for when a man gets married, it is but right he should hef his friends apout him, for a dance and a song. And it wass many a time I hef peen thinking, when I first became acquent with Moira Fergus, that we would hef a ferry goot wedding, and hef a tance and a tram; and it wass Alister Lewis the schoolmaster said to me the other day, 'Angus,' says he, 'do you not think of getting married? And

when you are married,' says he, 'my wife and me will come and drink a glass to you and Moira Fergus.' And now, Mr. MacDonald, there will be no wedding at all—and not a single tance—or a tram—and no one to be there and be quite sure that we are married."

Angus M'Eachran had become rather excited, and had blundered into eloquence. It was, indeed, a sore point with the young fisherman that Moira and he were to be deprived of the great merry-making in the life of a man or woman. They would be married in a corner, with no joyous crowd of witnesses, no skire of the pipes, no whiskey, no dancing or reels under the midnight sky.

"And you will not think, Mr. MacDonald," said he, returning to his ordinary grave and shy demeanour, "that I hef no thanks for you, although we will hef no goot wedding. That is not anpotty's fault but the fault of John Fergus; and when I will go to tell John Fergus that his daughter is married——"

"You will not go to tell John Fergus that, Angus M'Eachran," said the minister. "It is another that will tell John Fergus. It is Miss Sheila Mackenzie, that iss Mrs. Laffenter now, that will be coming to tek the news to John Fergus."

The minister spoke proudly. He was vain of his acquaintance with great people. He had, indeed, reserved this piece of news until he saw fit to overwhelm his visitor with it.

The young fisherman uttered an exclamation in the Gaelic; he could scarcely believe what he heard.

"Iss it Miss Sheila Mackenzie will be coming all the way from Borva to the marriage of Moira Fergus?" he said, with his eyes full of wonder.

"Ay, and her husband, too!" said the minister, proudly. "Ay, and they are coming with their schooner yacht, and eight men aboard of her, to say nothing of Mrs. Patterson's boy. And you were saying, Angus M'Eachran, there would be no one at your wedding. Oh no, there will be no one at your wedding! It will only be Mr. and Mrs. Laffenter that will be at your wedding!"

Angus could not reply to this deadly sarcasm; he was lost in astonishment. Then he suddenly said, snatching up his cap—

"I am going, Mr. MacDonald, to tek the news to Moira Fergus."

"Wait a minute, it iss a ferry great hurry you are in, Angus," said the minister. "You need not be afrait that any one will tek the news before yoursel'. There iss many things we hef to settle apout first——"

"But I will come ofer to-night again," said the fisherman—he was impatient to carry this wonderful news to Moira.

"Then there iss the tefle in your hurry, Angus M'Eachran!" said the minister, angrily. "You will come ofer again to-night? You will not come ofer again to-night! Do you think you can waste the tays and the nights in running apout Darroch, when it iss to Styornoway you hef to go, for the ring, and the money, and all that I hef told you?"

The fisherman stood abashed; he put his cap on the table, and was content to receive his instructions with patience.

But when he went out, and had got a safe distance from the house, he suddenly tossed his cap high in the air.

"Hey!" he cried, aloud, "here iss the good news for Moira Fergus!"

He laughed to himself as he sped rapidly across the moorland. It was a fine, bright morning; the sun was warm on the heather and the white rocks; now and again he saw before him a young grouse walk coolly across the dusty road. He took little notice, however, of anything around him. It was enough that the fresh air and the sunlight seemed to fill his lungs with a sort of laughing-gas. Never before had he walked so rapidly across the island.

The consequence was that he reached Ardtilleach about one o'clock.

"Now," said he to himself, "the girls will be at the school; and old John Fergus will be up at the curing-house; and what if Moira Fergus be all by herself at home?"

The news he had gave him so much courage that he did not spy about; he walked straight up to John Fergus's cottage, and, stooping, passed in. Sure enough, there was Moira, and alone. She was seated near the fire, and was cleaning and chopping up some vegetables for the big iron pot that stood beside her. When she recognized Angus M'Eachran, she uttered a little cry of surprise, then she hastily jumped to her feet, and beat the parings out of her lap. But the young fisherman was not offended by the untidy scraps of carrot and turnip that clung to her apron; he was the rather pleased to see that she was chopping up those vegetables very neatly—and he knew, for many a time he had had to make broth for himself.

"And are you not afrait, Angus, to come into this house?" she asked, anxiously.

"No, I am not afrait!" said he. "For I hef the good news for you—ay, ay, I hef the good news for you this day, Moira——"

"Iss it my father——?"

"No, no!" said he. "It iss nothing of your father. I will not ask your father for anything, not if he wass to live for sixty years, ay, and twenty years mirover. But I wass ofer to see Mr. MacDonald this morning—ay, I set out ferry soon, for I heard last night he wass come back from Borva—and this morning I wass with him for a ferry long time. And now it iss all settled, Moira, my lass, and this ferry night I will be going away to Styornoway to buy the ring, Moira, and get some money out of the bank, and other things. And Mr. MacDonald, he will say to me, 'Angus, you will hef to go and ask Moira Fergus to tell you the day she will be married, for effery young lass hass a right to that;' but I hef said to him, 'Mr. MacDonald, there iss no use for that; for it wass next Wednesday in the next week we wass to go away to Glasgow to be married; and that iss the day that iss fixed already'—and so, Moira, it iss

Wednesday of the next week you will be ready to go over—and—and—and iss there anything wrong with you, Moira Fergus?"

He offered her his hand to steady her; she was rather pale, and she trembled. Then she sat down on the wooden stool again, and turned her eyes to the floor.

"And it iss not ferry glad you are that the wedding iss near?" said he, with some disappointment.

"It iss not that, Angus M'Eachran," she said, in a low voice. "It iss that—I am afraid—and it is a ferry terrible thing to go away and be married all by yourself—and no friend with you——"

"No friend?" said he, with a sudden joy: if this was all her doubt, he would soon remove it. "Ay, ay, Moira Fergus, you hef not heard all the news. There will be no one to come to your wedding? Do you know this, Moira, that it iss Miss Sheila Mackenzie and her husband that iss an Englishman, and they are both coming to your wedding—ay, in that fine boat that iss the most beautiful boat that wass ever come in to Styornoway harbour—and who iss it in all this island that hass Mr. and Mrs. Laffenter come to her wedding—tell me that, Moira Fergus!"

Well, when Moira heard that Sheila Mackenzie and her husband were coming all the way from Borva to be present at her wedding, she burst into a fit of crying, and even the young man beside her understood what that meant.

"Ay, ay," said he, "it iss a ferry great deal the rich and the grand people can do for the poor people when it iss in their mind to do it, and it would be a pad tay for the poor people of Borva the tay that Miss Sheila would go away altogether to London; but there iss no fear of that now; and she is coming to your wedding, Moira, and it iss not because she is ferry rich and ferry grand that you will be proud of that, but I hef seen that you wass sore put about that there will be no woman at all at the wedding, and now here is one, and one that iss known through all the islands—and it iss nothing to cry about, Moira Fergus."

"No, it iss nothing to cry about," said the girl, "only—it iss a ferry great kindness—and I will not know what to say—ay, are you quite sure they are coming all the way to Darroch, Angus?"

"Indeed there iss more than that to tell you, Moira; for it iss Mrs. Laffenter will be for coming to Ardtilleach to speak to your father as soon as the wedding is over——"

"What do you say, Angus M'Eachran?" the girl said, suddenly rising. "Hef you no sense to let her speak of such a thing? You will know what a man's father iss when he iss angry; and it iss you and me that will hef to tek his anger, not a stranger that hass done us a great kindness; and it iss very thoughtless of you, Angus, to hef let Miss Sheila speak of that——"

"Moira, what are you thinking of?" he said. "When wass it that I hef seen Miss Sheila, and her away at Borva? It wass the minister, he wass speaking to both Mr. and Mrs. Laffenter, both of the two of them

together, and it wass Miss Sheila herself will want to see your father sure enough and mirover ! ”

The girl said nothing in reply, for a sudden fear had fallen over her : a shadow darkened the doorway. Angus M’Eachran half instinctively turned round—there was John Fergus, staring at him with an anger which for the moment could not express itself in words. Moira’s father was almost a dwarf in stature ; but he was broad-chested, bandy-legged, and obviously of great physical strength. He had a hard, grey, and sullen face, piercing black eyes under bushy grey eyebrows, thin lips, and a square jaw.

“ Ay, it iss you, Angus M’Eachran,” said he, still blocking up the doorway as if to prevent escape ; “ it wass a true word they will bring me that you will be for going into my house. And what iss it that will bring you to my house ? ”

“ It iss not a ferry friendly man you are, John Fergus,” said the tall young sailor, rather gloomily, “ that you will say such things. And what iss the harm that one man will go into another man’s house, and both of them neighbours together——”

“ Ay, this iss the harm of it ! ” said John Fergus, giving freer vent to his rage. “ You wass thinking that the lasses were at the school ; and you wass thinking that I wass away ofer at Killeena with the new oars ; and then you wass coming about the house—like a thief that will watch a time to come about a house—that wass the harm of it, Angus M’Eachran.”

The younger man’s face grew rather darker, but he kept his temper down.

“ I am no thief, John Fergus. If it wass any other man than yourself will say such a thing to me——”

“ No, you are no thief,” said the father, with sarcastic emphasis ; “ you will only come about the house when there iss effery one away from it but a young lass, and you will think there iss some whiskey in the house——”

The younger man burst into a bitter laugh.

“ Whiskey ! Iss it whiskey ! I hef come after the whiskey ! Indeed and mirover that would be a fine day the day I tasted a glass of your whiskey ; for there iss no man alive in Darroch or in Killeena too that offer had a glass of whiskey from you, John Fergus ! ”

At this deadly insult the older man, with something of an inarticulate cry of rage, darted forward, and would have seized his opponent had not Moira thrown herself between them.

“ Father,” the trembling girl said, putting her hands on his breast, “ keep back—keep back for a minute, and I will tell you—indeed it wass not the whiskey that Angus M’Eachran will come for—it wass a message there wass from Miss Sheila Mackenzie—and he will hear of it from the minister—and he will come in to the house for a minute—and there wass no harm in that. It iss your own house, father—you will not harm a man in your own house——”

He thrust her aside.

"Angus McEachran," said he, "this iss what I will say to you—you wass saying to yourself this many a day back that you will marry this lass here. I tell you now, by Kott, you will not marry her—not this year, nor the next year, nor many a year after that. And there iss more ass I hef to say to you. This house iss no house for you; and if it iss any day I will come in to the house and you will be here, it will be a bad day that day for you, by Kott."

"That iss ferry well said," retorted the younger man, whose eyes were afire, but who kept himself outwardly calm; "and this iss what I will say to you, John Fergus. The day may come to you that you will be ferry glad for me to come into your house, and you will be ferry sore in your heart that you wass saying such things to me this day. And I will say this to you—do you think it iss the fighting will keep me out of the house? Wass you thinking I wass afrait of you? By Kott, John Fergus, two men like you would not mek me afrait; and that day will be a bad day for you that you tek to fighting with me."

The girl was once more for interfering with her entreaties.

"No, Moira," said her lover, "stand back—I am for no fighting—if there iss fighting it iss not in a man's own house that iss the place for fighting. But this iss what I will say to you, John Fergus, that you hef no need to fear that I will come to your house. No, not if I wass living for thirty or twenty years in Ardtilleach will I come into your house—neffer, as I am a living man."

And that vow he kept.

CHAPTER V.

THE WEDDING.

THE *Princess Sheila* lay at her moorings in the bay; and the morning sunlight shone on her tall and shapely masts and on the gleaming white decks. It was a lonely part of the coast of Darroch; there was not another vessel on the smooth plain of the sea; far away in the direction of some rocks a couple of seals were alternately raising their heads above the water—like the black head of a man—as if in wonder over this invasion of their silent haunts. Beautiful, indeed, was the morning of Moira Fergus's marriage. The water around the shore was so calm and so clear that one could distinguish the sand and the white star-fish at an extraordinary depth. The sea was of a light blue fading into grey at the horizon. The sky was of a darker blue; and the almost motionless clouds dappled the sunlit shoulders of the hills and the wide expanse of the moorland.

About ten o'clock a pinnacle put off from the yacht, and the quiet bay echoed the sound of the rowlocks as the four sturdy seamen pulled into the land. They ran her by the side of some loose stones that served for

a rude landing-jetty; and then Mr. and Mrs. Lavender stepped on shore. The former was certainly not in proper wedding attire, for he had on his ordinary boating-suit of blue homespun; but the young lady wore a yachting-costume which had been designed by her husband, and which was the wonder of all the islands around. The old women who had seen Miss Sheila, as they mostly called her, but once in this costume, had many a long story to tell about it over the peat-fire to their neighbours who had not been so fortunate; and it was gravely doubted whether the wife of Sir James, or the wife of the Duke of Argyll, or even the Queen herself had such a wonderful dress and hat and gloves.

They walked up and over the rough shingle, until they reached a path skirting some low sand-hills, and this they followed along the shore until they reached the manse. The minister was at the door; he came out bare-headed to receive them; there was a great dignity in his speech.

"Well, are the young folks here?" said Sheila.

"Yes, indeed and mirover," said the minister, "and it will be a proud day for them that you will sign the marriage-lines, Mrs. Laffenter, and you, Sir, too. And I hef got the horse for you, Mrs. Laffenter, if you will be determined to go to Ardtilleach. And I hef peen told that the English-hef two dinners in the day, which is a strange thing to me, but it iss no pusiness of mine whateffer; and you will be so long in England every year, Mrs. Laffenter, that you will hef gone away from the way you used to live at home; but if you wass so kind, now, ass to tek the first dinner—that iss at one o'clock—in my poor house, it would be a proud day for me too. And it iss no ferry fine dinner I hef, but some mutton just ass goot ass you will get it in London; and I hef some ferry goot whisky—there iss no petter apout here. And if you wass so kind, Miss—Mrs. Laffenter——"

"Certainly, Mr. MacDonald," said Mr. Lavender, interposing; "we will dine with you at one, on condition you dine with us at seven—that is, if we can get back from Ardtilleach by that time. You must try the English way of having two dinners—you may call the second one supper, if you like. Now don't let us keep the young people waiting."

Angus M'Eachran and Moira Fergus were seated in the minister's parlour, both of them very silent. When Mrs. Lavender entered the room, the girl rose hastily, as if she would rush forward to thank her; then she paused, and seemed to shrink back.

"And are you ferry well, Moira?" said Mrs. Lavender, advancing and holding out her hand. "And do you remember the last time I saw you at Ardtilleach?"

The girl, trembling a good deal, made a curtsy, and timidly took the hand that was offered to her.

"It iss no words I hef this tay—to thank you," she said, "that you will come to the wedding of a poor lass—for Angus M'Eachran he wass wanting me to tek the money to get the clothes for the wedding, but if I had got the clothes for the wedding, it wass effery one in Ardtilleach

would know of it. And—and—that iss why I hef not the clothes for the wedding.'

It was an apology. Moira was ashamed of her rough clothes, that were not fit for a wedding to which Miss Sheila Mackenzie of Borva had come. But Sheila made her sit down, and sate down beside her, and talked to her of many things, so that there was soon an end to her shamefacedness.

"Mr. MacDonald," said Angus M'Eachran, rather anxiously—seeing that the minister was thinking more of his distinguished guests than of the business in hand, "if you wass ass kind ass to be quick—for it iss Moira's father if he wass to go back to the house, he might hef some thought of it."

"Ay, ay," said the minister, recollecting himself. "Where is Isabel?"

He called his housekeeper into the room; she was smartly dressed, and she wore a gold chain that her son had sent her from America. The minister now grew formal in his manner. He spoke in a solemn and low voice. He directed Angus M'Eachran and Moira Fergus to stand up together; and then, with a closed Bible in his hand, he placed himself before them, the three witnesses of the ceremony standing on one side. The light from the small window fell on the young Highland girl's face—she was now very pale, and she kept her eyes bent on the floor.

He began by offering up a prayer—a strange, rambling series of Biblical quotations, of entreaties, of exhortations addressed to those before him—which was at once earnest, pathetic, and grotesque. Mr. MacDonald would rather have prayed in the Gaelic; but the presence of the strangers led him to speak in English, which was obviously a difficulty to him. For into this curious prayer he introduced a sort of history and justification of what he had done with regard to the young people.

"Ay," he said, "it wass to Glassgow they were going, and they would hef peen as sheeps in the den of the lions, and as the young lambs among the wolves. For it iss written of Babylon the evil city, Lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of the great nations from ta north country, ay, and Chaldea shall be a spoil. Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about; all ye that will pend the pow shoot at her, ay, and spare no arrows, for she has sinned against the Lord! And it wass to Glassgow they were going; and it wass no man could hear that and not safe them from going. And we had the great help of frients from far islands, ay, from the desolate places of the islands, and they came to us in our trouple, and it wass a great help they would gife to us, and the Lord will tek that into account, and reward them for the help they hef given to the young lad and the young lass that iss before us this tay."

Then he went on to denounce anger and evil passions as the cause of much of human trouble; and he closed his prayer with an earnest hope that Divine influence would soften the heart of John Fergus, and lead him to live in peace and affection with his daughter and her husband.

The exhortation following the prayer was shorter than the prayer. It referred chiefly to the duties of married life; but even here Mr. MacDonald brought in a good deal of justification of his own conduct in having assisted a young lad and a young lass to get married.

"Ay, ay," said he, "it iss written that a man shall leaf his father and his mother and ko and be joined unto his wife; and the wife, too, she will do the same, as it hass peen from the peginning of the worlt, amen. And why no? And if there iss any man so foolish ass to say to a young man or a young lass, 'No, you will hef to wait until I die before you will be for getting marriet, and until I die you will not be for getting marriet at all,' I will say to him that he is a foolish man, and a man who has no sense in his head whateffer. And there iss too much of the young men going away from the islands apout us, and they will go away to Glassgow, and to Greenock, and to America, and to other places, and they will marry wives there, and who iss to know what kind of wives they will marry? No, it iss petter, ay, and ferry much petter, for a young man to hef seen a young lass in the years of her young tays, and he will know of her family, and he will hef seen her going to the church, and he will know she is a fit lass to be a wife for him and no strange woman that hass lifed in a great town, where there are wild men, and sodgers, and the Roman Catholic priests."

Presently the simple ceremony had to be performed; and when Angus M'Eachran was bidden to take the young girl's hand, and when the minister demanded to know if any one were present who had aught to say against the marriage of these two there was a silence as if every one was listening for the sound of a footstep on the gravel outside.

There was no answer to that summons; wherever John Fergus was, he was certainly not in the neighbourhood of Mr. MacDonald's manse.

"And so you are a married woman, Moira," said Sheila, when it was all over.

The girl could not speak, but there were big tears in her eyes, and she went forward and took Mrs. Lavender's hand and timidly kissed it. Angus M'Eachran had been standing about, silent and awkward; at length he, too, went forward, and said in desperation——

"Mrs. Lafenter, it iss a ferry goot pair of oars for a small poat I hef made last week at Ardtilleach. Will I send you the oars to Borva?"

"Oh, no, Angus," the young lady said; "that is ferry kind of you, but we have plenty of oars at Borva. But this is what I will be ferry glad if you will do—it is a ferry good carpenter they say you are, and any day you have the time to make a small boat for a boy that he will be able to pull about with a string, then I will be ferry glad to have the boat from you."

"Ay," said Angus, with his face brightening, "and will you tek the poat? Ay, ay, you will gife me time to mek the poat, and I will be ferry proud the day that you will tek the poat from me."

Then he turned to the minister.

"And, Mr. MacDonald," said he, rather shamefacedly, "if you will not be ferry angry, there iss a gallon of goot whiskey—oh, ay, it iss ferry goot whiskey, I hef peen told—and I will pring it over this morning when I wass coming ofer, and I hef left it out in the heather——"

"You hef left it out in the heather!" said the minister, angrily; "and it iss a foolish man you are, Angus M'Eachran, to go and leaf a gallon of goot whiskey out on the heather! And where is the heather? And maybe you will go now and get it out of the heather!"

"I wass afrait to say apout it pefore," Angus said. "But I will go and get you the whiskey, and it iss ferry proud I am that you will tak the whiskey—and it iss not ferry pad whiskey mirover."

As soon as Angus had gone off to the hiding-place of the jar, they all went outside into the clear air, which was fresh with the sea breeze and sweet with the smell of the peats.

"Sheila," said Mr. Lavender, "can you hurry on Mr. MacDonald's housekeeper? The great work of the day has to be done yet. And there will be little time to cross to Ardtilleach."

"Oh, Mrs. Laffenter!" cried Moira. "You will not go to see my father!"

"Indeed, I will," said Sheila. "Are you afraid he will eat me, Moira?"

"I am afraid—I do not know what I am afraid of—except that you will not go to him, that iss all I ask from you, Mrs. Laffenter——"

"The tefle——" exclaimed Mr. MacDonald, fiercely, and then he recollected in whose society he was. "What iss it will keep Mrs. Laffenter from speaking to any one? Your father iss an angry man, Moira Fergus—ay, you will be Moira M'Eachran now—he iss a ferry angry man—but will he use his pad language to Mrs. Laffenter? It iss not to be thought of, Moira!"

At this moment the yellow-bearded young fisherman came back with the jar of whiskey; and he blushed a little as he handed the little present to the minister.

"Ay," said Mr. MacDonald, going into the house. "Isabal must be ferry quick, for it iss a long way the way to Ardtilleach, and the second tinner of the tay it will be on poard the yacht at eight o'clock or seven o'clock or petween poth of the two. And Isabal she must go town to the yacht and tell that tall Duncan of Mr. Mackenzie's to gife her the saddle for Mrs. Laffenter's horse."

It was with great difficulty that they could persuade Angus and Moira to come into the house and sit down at the table with the great people from Borvabost. Mr. MacDonald of himself could never have managed it; but Sheila took Moira by the hand and led her into the room, and then the young husband silently followed.

The minister had been too modest in speaking of the banquet he had had prepared for his guests. He had promised them but mntton and whiskey;

and behold there was a bottle of claret-wine on the table, and the very first dish was the head and shoulders of a magnificent salmon.

"Well, that is a fine fish!" said Mr. Lavender, regarding its mighty proportions.

"Oh, ay," said the minister, immensely flattered. "He wass a fine fish—a grand fish. He wass ass big ass a dog—and more."

It was a great grief to the minister that Mr. Lavender would not taste of the claret, which had come all the way from Stornoway, and was of so excellent a vintage that it was named after the Prime Minister in Parliament himself. But Sheila had some of it in a tumbler, and pronounced it very good; though the minister observed that "there wass no great strength to go to the head in the French wines," and he "wass ferry much surprised to see that Mrs. Laffenter would hef water with the claret-wine."

"And I hear that Angus is going to build a cottage for you, Moira," said Mrs. Lavender, "further removed from the village and the curing-houses. That will be ferry good for you; and it is not every one that has a husband who can work at two trades, and be a good fisherman on the sea, and a good carpenter on shore. And I suppose you will be going back now to the house that he has at present.

"Ay, that iss the worst of it," said the girl, sadly. "If my father iss ferry angry, it will be a pad thing that we will hef to lif in Ardtilleach together; and all the neighbours will know that he is angry, and he will hef the long story to tell to each of them."

"But you must not look at it that way," her counsellor said, cheerfully. "You will soon get over your father's anger; and the neighbours—well, the neighbours are likely to take your side of the story, if there is a story. Now, you must keep up your spirits, Moira; it is a bad thing for a young wife to be downhearted, for a man will soon tire of that, because he may not understand the cause of it. And why should you be downhearted? I dare say, now, that when you come over to Ardtilleach—you will not be long after us, I suppose—you will find the neighbours ready to hef a dance over the wedding as soon as the evening comes on."

As there was little time to be lost on the part of those who were coming back the same evening to the yacht, the small and shaggy animal that was to carry Mrs. Lavender to Ardtilleach was brought round to the door. The young bride and bridegroom, with somewhat wistful eyes, saw their ambassadress set out, her husband walking smartly by her side.

"It iss a great thing they hef undertaken to do," said the minister, "ay, and if they cannot do it, there iss not any one in all the islands will be able to do it."

Helen of Troy.

" For first of all the spherèd signs whereby
Love severs light from darkness, and most high
In the white front of January there glows
The rose-red sign of Helen like a rose,"

Prelude to *Tristram and Iseult*, lines 91-94.

HELEN OF TROY is one of those ideal creatures of the fancy on which time, space and circumstance, and moral probability, exert no sway. It would be impossible to conceive of her except as inviolably beautiful and young, in spite of all her wanderings and all she suffered at the hands of Aphrodite and of men. She moves through Greek heroic legend as the desired of all men and the possessed of many. Theseus bore her away while yet a girl from Sparta. Her brethren, Castor and Polydeukes, recovered her from Athens by force, and gave to her Æthra, the mother of Theseus, for bondwoman. Then all the youths of Hellas wooed her in the young world's prime. She was at last assigned in wedlock to Menelaus, by whom she conceived her only earthly child, Hermione. Paris, by aid of Aphrodite, won her love and fled with her to Egypt and to Troy. In Troy she abode more than twenty years, and was the mate of Deiphobus after the death of Paris. When the strife raised for her sake was ended, Menelaus restored her with honour to his home in Lacedæmon. There she received Telemachus and saw her daughter mated to Neoptolemus. But even after death she rested not from the service of love. The great Achilles, who in life had loved her by hearsay, but had never seen her, clasped her among the shades upon the island Leuké, and begat Euphorion. Through all these adventures Helen maintains an ideal freshness, a mysterious virginity of soul. She is not touched by the passion she inspires, or by the wreck of empires ruined in her cause. Fate deflowers her not, nor do years impair the magic of her charm. Like beauty, she belongs alike to all and none. She is not judged as wives or mothers are, though she is both; to her belong soul-wounding blossoms of inexorable love, as well as pain-healing poppy-heads of oblivion; all eyes are blinded by the adorable, incomparable grace which Aphrodite sheds around her form.

Whether Helen was the slave or the beloved of Aphrodite, or whether, as Herodotus hinted, she was herself a kind of Aphrodite, we are hardly told. At one time she appears the willing servant of the goddess; at another she groans beneath her bondage. But always and on all occasions she owes everything to the Cyprian queen. Her very body-gear preserved the powerful charm with which she was invested at her birth.

When the Phocæans robbed the Delphian treasure-house, the wife of one of their captains took and wore Helen's necklace, whereupon she doted on a young Epirot soldier and eloped with him.

Whose daughter was Helen? The oldest legend calls her the child of Leda and of Zeus. We have all read the tale of the Swan who was her father amid the rushes of Eurotas, the tale which Leonardo and Buonarroti and Correggio thought worthy of their loveliest illustration. Another story gives her for the offspring of Oceanus and Tethys, as though, in fact, she were an Aphrodite risen from the waves. In yet a third, Zeus is her sire and Nemesis her mother; and thus the lesson of the tale of Troy was allegorized in Helen's pedigree. She is always god-begotten and divinely fair. Was it possible that anything so exquisite should have endured rough ravishment and borne the travail of the siege of Troy? This doubt possessed the later poets of the legendary age. They spun a myth according to which Helen reached the shore of Egypt on the ship of Paris; but Paris had to leave her there in cedar-scented chambers by the stream of Nile, when he went forth to plough the foam, uncomfortable save by her phantom. And for a phantom the Greeks strove with the Trojans on the windy plains of Ilium. For a phantom's sake brave Hector died, and the leonine swiftness of Achilles was tamed, and Zeus bewailed Sarpedon, and Priam's towers were levelled with the ground. Helen, meanwhile—the beautiful, the inviolable—sat all day long among the palm-groves, twining lotus-flowers for her hair, and learning how to weave rare Eastern patterns in the loom. This legend hides a delicate satire upon human strife. For what do men disquiet themselves in warfare to the death, and tossing on sea-waves? Even for a phantom—for the shadow of their desire, the which remains secluded in some unapproachable far sacred land. A wide application may be given to Augustine's passionate outcry: "*Quo vobis adhuc et adhuc ambulare vias difficiles et laboriosas? Non est requies ubi quæritis eam. Quærite quod quæritis; sed ibi non est ubi quæritis. Beatam vitam quæritis in regione mortis; non est illic.*" Those who spake ill of Helen suffered. Stesichorus had ventured in the *Ἰλίου Πέρις* to lay upon her shoulders all the guilt and suffering of Hellas and of Troy. Whereupon he was smitten with blindness, nor could he recover his sight till he had written the palinode which begins—

οὐκ ἔστ' ἔτυμος λόγος οὗτος,
οὐδ' ἔβας ἐν ναυσὶν ἐσέλμοις,
οὐδ' ἴκεο πέργαμα Τροίας.*

Even Homer, as Plato hints, knew not that blindness had fallen on him for like reason. To assail Helen with reproach was not less dangerous than to touch the Ark of the Covenant, for with the Greeks beauty was a holy thing. How perfectly beautiful she was we know from the legend of the cups modelled upon her breasts suspended in the shrine of Aphrodite.

* "Not true is that tale; nor didst thou journey in benched ships, or come to towers of Troy."

When Troy was taken, and the hungry soldiers of Odysseus roamed through the burning palaces of Priam and his sons, their swords fell beneath the vision of her loveliness. She had wrought all the ruin, yet Menelaus could not touch her when she sailed forth, swanlike, fluttering white raiment, with the imperturbable sweet smile of a goddess on her lips. It remained for a Roman poet to describe her vile and shrinking—

Illa sibi infestos eversa ob Pergama Teucros,
Et poenas Danaûm et deserti conjugis iras
Permetuens, Troiæ et patriæ communis Erinnyes,
Abdiderat sese atque aris invisâ sedebat.*

The morality of these lines belongs to a later age of reflection upon Greek romance. In Homer there are no such epigrams. Between the Helen of the *Iliad*, revered by the elders in the Scaean gate, and the Helen of the *Odyssey*, queenlike among her Spartan maidens, there has passed no agony of fear. The shame which she has truly felt, has been tempered to a silent sorrow, and she has poured her grief forth beside Andromache, over the corpse of Hector.

If we would fain see the ideal beauty of the early Greek imagination in a form of flesh-and-blood reality, we must follow Helen through the Homeric poems. She first appears when Iris summons her to watch the duel of Paris and Menelaus. Husband and lover are to fight beneath the walls of Troy. She, meanwhile, is weaving a purple peplus with the deeds of war done and the woes endured for her sake far and wide :—

She in a moment round her shoulders flings
Robe of white lawn, and from the threshold springs,
Yearning and pale, with many a tender tear.
Also two women in her train she brings,
The large-eyed Clymenê and Æthra fair,
And at the western gates right speedily they were.†

English eyes know well how Helen looked as she left her chamber and hastened to the gate; for has not Leighton painted her with just so much of far-off sorrow in her gaze as may become a daughter of the gods? In the gate sat Priam and his elders, and as they looked at Helen no angry curses rose to their lips, but reverential admiration filled them, together with an awful sense of the dread fate attending her :—

These seeing Helen at the tower arrive,
One to another wingèd words addressed:
"Well may the Trojans and Achæans strive,
And a long time bear sorrow and unrest,

* "She, shrinking from the Trojans' hate,
Made frantic by their city's fate,
Nor dreading less the Danaan sword,
The vengeance of her injured lord:
She, Troy's and Argos' common fiend,
Sat cowering, by the altar screened."—*Conington*.

† Worsley's *Iliad*, iii. 17. The other quotations are from the same version.

For such a woman, in her cause and quest,
 Who like immortal goddesses in face
 Appeareth; yet 'twere even thus far best
 In ships to send her back to her own place,
 Lest a long curse she leave to us and all our race."

It is thus simply, and by no mythological suggestion of Aphrodite's influence, that Homer describes the spirit of beauty which protected Helen among the people she had brought to sore straits.

Priam accosts her tenderly: not hers the blame that the gods scourge him in his old age with war. Then he bids her sit beside him and name the Greek heroes as they march beneath. She obeys and points out Agamemnon, Odysseus, and Ajax, describing each, as she knew them of old. But for her twin brothers she looks in vain; and the thought of them touches her with the sorrow of her isolation and her shame. In the same book, after Paris has been withdrawn, not without dishonour, from the duel by Aphrodite, Helen is summoned by her liege mistress to his bed. Helen was standing on the walls, and the goddess, disguised as an old spinning-woman, took her by the skirt, bidding her hie back to her lover, whom she would find in his bedchamber, not as one arrayed for war, but as a fair youth resting haply from the dance. Homer gives no hint that Aphrodite is here the personified wish of Helen's own heart going forth to Paris. On the contrary, the Cyprian queen appears in the interests of the Phrygian youth, whom she would fain see comforted. It is a good case of the objectivity of the Homeric deities. Under her disguise Helen recognized Aphrodite, the terrible queen, whose bond-woman she was forced to be. For a moment she struggled against her fate. "Art thou come again," she cried, "to bear me to some son of earth beloved of thee, that I may serve his pleasure to my own shame? Nay, rather, put off divinity and be thyself his odalisque."

With *him* remain,
Him sit with, and from heaven thy feet refrain;
 Weep, till his wife he make thee, or fond slave.
 I go to him no more, to win new stain,
 And scorn of Trojan women again outbrave,
 Whelmed even now with grief's illimitable wave.

But go she must. Aphrodite is a hard taskmistress, and the mysterious bond of beauty which chains Helen to her cannot be broken. It is in vain too that Helen taunts Paris: he reminds her of the first fruition of their love in the island Cranaë; and at the last she has to lay her down at his side, not uncomplaining, conquered as it were by the reflex of the passion she herself excites. It is in the chamber of Paris that Hector finds her. She has vainly striven to send Paris forth to battle; and the sense of her own degradation, condemned to love a man love-worthy only for the beauty of his limbs, overcomes her when she sees the noble Hector clothed in panoply for war. Her passionate outbreak of self-pity and self-reproach is perhaps the strongest indication given in the *Iliad* of a moral estimate

of Helen's crime. The most consummate art is shown by the poet in thus quickening the conscience of Helen by contact with the nobility of Hector. Like Guinevere, she for a moment seems to say, "Thou art the highest, and most human too!" casting from her as worthless the allurements of the base love for whose sake she had left her home. In like manner it was not without the most exquisite artistic intention that Homer made the parting scene between Andromache and Hector follow immediately upon this meeting. For Andromache in the future there remained only sorrow and servitude. Helen was destined to be tossed from man to man, always desirable and always delicate, like the sea-foam that floats upon the crests of waves. But there is no woman who reading the *Iliad* would not choose to weep with Andromache in Hector's arms rather than to smile like Helen in the laps of lovers for whom she little cared. Helen and Andromache meet together before Hector's corpse, and it is here that we learn to love best what is womanly in Leda's daughter. The mother and the wife have bewailed him in high thrilling *threni*. Then Helen advances to the bier and cries :

Hector, of brethren dearest to my heart,
 For I in sooth am Alexander's bride,
 Who brought me hither : would I first had died !
 For 'tis the twentieth year of doom deferred
 Since Troyward from my fatherland I hied ;
 Yet never in those years mine ear hath heard
 From thy most gracious lips one sharp accusing word ;
 Nay, if by other I haply were reviled,
 Brother, or sister fair, or brother's bride,
 Or mother (for the king was alway mild),
 Thou with kind words the same hast pacified,
 With gentle words, and mien like summer-tide.
 Wherefore I mourn for thee and mine own ill,
 Grieving at heart : for in Troy town so wide
 Friend have I none nor harbourer of goodwill,
 But from my touch all shrink with deadly shuddering chill.

It would have been impossible to enhance more worthily than thus the spirit of courtesy and knightly kindness which was in Hector ; qualities in truth, which, together with his loyalty to Andromache, endeared the champion of the Trojans to chivalry, and placed Hector upon the list of worthies beside King Arthur and Godfrey of Boulogne.

The character of Helen loses much of its charm and becomes more conventional in the *Odyssey*. It is difficult to believe that the same poet who put into her lips the last lines of that *threnos* could have ventured to display the same woman calm and innocent and queenlike in the home of Menelaus :

While in his mind he sat revolving this,
 Forth from her fragrant bower came Helen fair,
 Bright as the golden-spindled Artemis.
 Adraste set the couch ; Alcippe there
 The fine-spun carpet spread ; and Phylô bare

The silver basket which Alcandra gave,
 Consort of Polybus, who dwelt whilere
 In Thebes of Egypt, whose great houses save
 Wealth in their walls, large store, and pomp of treasure brave.

Helen shows her prudence and insight by at once declaring the strange guest to be Telemachus; busy with housewifely kindness, she prepares for him a comfortable couch at night; nor does she shrink from telling again the tales of Troy, and the craft which helped Odysseus in the Wooden Horse. The blame of her elopement with Paris she throws on Aphrodite, who had carried her across the sea:

Leaving my child an orphan far away,
 And couch, and husband who had known no peer,
 First in all grace of soul and beauty shining clear.

Such words, no doubt, fell with honey-sweet flattery from the lips of Helen on the ears of Menelaus. Yet how could he forget the grief of his bereavement, the taunts of Achilles and Thersites, and the ten years' toil at Troy endured for her? Perhaps he remembered the promise of Proteus, who had said, "Thee will the immortals send to the Elysian plains and furthest verge of earth; where dwells yellow-haired Rhadamanthus, and where the ways of life are easiest for men; snow falls not there, nor storm, nor any rain, but Ocean ever breathes forth delicate zephyr breezes to gladden men; since thou hast Helen for thine own, and art the son-in-law of Zeus." Such future was full recompence for sorrow in the past. Besides, Helen, as Homer tells, had charms to soothe the soul and drown the memory of the saddest things. Even at this time, when thought is troublesome, she mixes Egyptian nepenthé with the wine—nepenthé "which, whoso drinks thereof when it is mingled in the bowl, begets for him oblivion of all woe; through a whole day he drops no tear adown his cheek, not even should his sire or mother die, nay, should they slay his brother or dear son before his face, and he behold it with his eyes. Such virtuous juices had the child of Zeus, of potent charm, which Polydamna, wife of Thon, gave to her, the Egyptian woman, where earth yields many medicines, some of weal and some of bane." This nepenthé was the secret of Helen's power. In the fifteenth book of the *Odyssey* we have yet another glimpse of Helen in the palace of Menelaus. She interprets an omen in favour of Odysseus, which had puzzled Menelaus, and gives to Telemachus a costly mantle, star-bright, the web of her own loom, produced from the very bottom of the chest in which she stored her treasures. The only shadow cast upon Helen in the *Odyssey* is to be found lurking in the dubious name of Megapenthes, Menelaus' son by a slave-woman, who was destined after his sire's death to expel her from fair Lacedæmon. We may remember that it was on the occasion of the spousal of this son to Alector's daughter, and of the sending of Hermione to be the bride of Neoptolemus, that Telemachus first appeared before the eyes of Helen.

The charm of Helen in the Homeric poems is due in a great measure

to the *naïveté* of the poet's art. The situations in which she appears are never strained, nor is the ethical feeling, though indicated, suffered to disturb the calm influence of her beauty. This is not the case with Æschylus. Already, as before hinted, Stesichorus in his lyric interludes had ventured to assail the character of Helen, applying to her conduct the moral standard which Homer kept carefully out of sight. Æschylus goes further. His object was to use Hellenic romance as the subject matter for a series of dramatic studies which should set forth his conception of the divine government of the world. A genius for tragedy which has never been surpassed was subordinated by him to a sublime philosophy of human life. It was no longer possible for Helen to escape judgment. Her very name supplied the keynote of reproach. Rightly was she called Helen—*ἑλένη*, *ἐλάνθρος*, *ἐλέπτολις*—"a hell of ships, hell of men, hell of cities," she sailed forth to Troy, and the heedless Trojans sang marriage songs in her praise, which soon were turned to songs of mourning for her sake. She whom they welcomed as "a spirit of unruffled calm, a gentle ornament of wealth, a darter of soft glances, a soul-wounding love-blossom," was found to be no less a source of mischief than is a young lion nurtured in the palace for the ruin of its heirs. Soon had the Trojans reason to revile her as a "Fury bringing woe on wives." The choruses of the *Agamemnon* are weighted with the burden of her sin. "*τὸ δὲ παράνομος Ἑλένη*," it breaks forth: "thine is the blood-guilt of those many many souls slain beneath Troy walls!" She is incarnate Até, the soul-seducing, crime-engendering, woe-begetting curse of two great nations. Zeus, through her sin, wrought ruin for the house of Priam, wanton in its wealth. In the dark came blinded Paris and stole her forth, and she went lightly through her husband's doors, and dared a hateful deed. Menelaus, meanwhile, gazed on the desecrated marriage-bed, and seemed to see her floating through his halls; and the sight of beauteous statues grew distasteful to his eyes, and he yearned for her across the sea in dreams. Nought was left when morning came but vain forth-stretchings of eager hands after the shapes that follow on the paths of sleep. Then war awoke, and Ares, who barter the bodies of men for gold, kept sending home to Hellas from Troy a little white dust stored in brazen urns. It is thus that Æschylus places in the foreground, not the witchery of Helen and the charms of Aphrodite, but her lightness and her sin, the woe it wrought for her husband, and the heavy griefs that through her fell on Troy and Hellas. It would be impossible to moralise the consequences of the woman's crime with greater sternness.

Unfortunately we have no means of stating how Sophocles dealt with the romance of Helen. Judging by analogy, however, we may feel sure that in this as in other instances he did not abandon the ethical standpoint of Æschylus, while treating the child of Leda, not as an incarnation of demonic Até, but as a woman whose character deserved the most profound analysis. Euripides, as usual, went a step further. The bloom of unconscious innocence had been brushed by Æschylus from the flower

of Greek romance. It was impossible for any subsequent dramatist to avoid in some way moralising the character of Helen. The way selected by Euripides was to bring her down to the level of common life. The scene in the *Troades* in which Helen stands up to plead for her life against Hecuba before the angry Menelaus, is one of the most complete instances of the Euripidean sophistry. The tragic circumstances of Troy in ruins and of injured husband face to face with guilty wife are all forgotten, while Helen develops a very clever defence of her conduct in a long rhetorical oration. The theatre is turned into a law-court, and forensic eloquence is substituted for dramatic poetry. Hecuba replies with an elaborate description of the lewdness, vanity, and guile of Helen, which we may take to be a fair statement of the poet's own conception of her character, since in the *Electra* and the *Orestes* he puts similar charges into the mouth of Agamemnon's daughter. There is no doubt that Hecuba has the best of the argument. She paints the beauty of her son Paris and the barbaric pomp which he displayed at Sparta. Then turning to Helen—

ὁ σὸς δ' ἰδὼν νῦν τοῦς ἐποίηθ' ἑκπρία·
τὰ μῦθ' ἀρ' πᾶντ' ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτῃ βροτοῖς,
καὶ τοῦνεμ' ὁρῶς ἀφροσύνης ἄρχει θεῶς.*

Sententious epigrams like this, by which the myths were philosophized to suit the occasions of daily life, exactly suited the temper of the Athenian audience in the age of Euripides. But Hecuba proceeds: "You played your husband off against your lover, and your lover against your husband, hoping always to keep the one or the other by your artifice; and when Troy fell, no one found you tying the halter or sharpening the knife against your own throat, as any decent woman in your position would have done." At the end of her speech she seems to have convinced Menelaus, who orders the attendants to carry off Helen to the ships, that she may be taken to Argos and killed there. Hecuba begs him not to embark her on the same boat with himself. "Why?" he asks. "Is she heavier than she used to be?" The answer is significant:

οὐκ ἔστ' ἐραστὴς ὅστις οὐκ ἀέλει φιλεῖ.

"Once a lover, always a lover." And so it turns out; for, at the opening of the *Orestes*, Helen arrives in comfort at the side of Menelaus. He now is afraid lest she should be seized and stoned by the Argives, whose children had been slain for her sake in Troy. Nor is the fear vain. Orestes and Pylades lay hold of her, and already the knife is at her throat, when Phœbus descends and declares that Helen has been caught up to heaven to reign with her brothers Castor and Polydeukes. A more immoral termination to her adventures can hardly be imagined; for Euripides, following hitherto upon the lines of the Homeric story, has

* "Thy own soul, gazing at him, became Kupria: for Aphrodite, as her name denotes, is all the folly of mortals."

been at great pains to analyse her legend into a common tale of adultery and female fascination. He now suddenly shifts his ground and deifies the woman he had sedulously vilified before. His true feeling about Helen is expressed in the lines spoken by Electra to Clytemnestra (*Electra*, 1062):

τὸ μὲν γὰρ εἶδος αἶνον ἔξιον φέρει
 Ἑλένης τε καὶ σοῦ, δύο δ' ἔφυτε συγγένω,
 ἄμφω ματαίῳ Καστορός τ' οὐκ ἄξιω.
 ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἄρπασθεῖσ' ἐκούσ' ἀπώλετο,
 σὺ δ' ἄνδρ' ἕριστον Ἑλλάδος διώλεσας.

You and your sister are a proper pair, and your beauty has brought you the credit you deserve: both are light women and unworthy of Castor; for Helen allowed herself to be ravished and undone, while you killed the best man in Greece. Further illustrations of the Euripidean conception of Helen as a worthless woman, who had the art to reconquer a weak husband's affection, might be drawn from the tirade of Peleus against Menelaus in the *Andromache* (590, &c.).

This Euripidean reading of the character of Helen was natural to a sceptical and sophistical age, when the dimly moralised myths of ancient Hellas had become the raw material for a poet's casuistry. Yet, in the heart of the Greek people, Homer had still a deeper, firmer place than even Euripides; and the thought of Helen, ever beautiful and ever young, survived the rude analysis of the Athenian drama. Her romance recovered from the prosaic rationalism to which it had been subjected, thanks, no doubt, to the many sculptors and painters who immortalized her beauty without suggesting the woes that she had brought upon the world. Those very woes, perhaps, may have added pathos to her charm: for had not she too suffered in the strife of men? How the artists dealt with the myth of Helen we only know by scattered hints and fragments. One bas-relief, engraved by Millingen, reveals her standing calm beneath the sword of Menelaus. That sword is lifted, but it will not fall. Beauty, breathed around her like a spell, creates a magic atmosphere through which no steel can pierce. In another bas-relief, from the Campana Museum, she is entering Sparta on a chariot, side by side with Menelaus, not like a captive, but with head erect and haughty mien, and proud hand placed upon the horse's reins. Philostratus, in his *Lives of the Sophists*, describes an exceedingly beautiful young philosopher, whose mother bore a close resemblance to the picture of Helen by Eumelus. If the lineaments of the mother were repeated in the youth, the eyes of Helen in her picture must have been large and voluptuous, her hair curled in clusters, and her teeth of dazzling whiteness. It is probable that the later artists, in their illustrations of the romance of Helen, used the poems of Lesches and Arctinus, now lost, but of which the *Posthomerica* of Quintus Smyrnaeus preserve to us a feeble reflection. This poet of the fourth century after Christ does all in his power to rehabilitate the character of Helen by laying the fault of her crime on Paris, and by

describing at length the charm which Venus shed around her sacred person. It was only by thus insisting upon the dæmonic influence which controlled the fate of Helen that the conclusions reached by the rationalizing process of the dramatists could be avoided. The Cyclic poems thus preserved the heroic character of Helen and her husband at the expense of Aphrodite, while Euripides had said plainly : " What you call Aphrodite is your own lust." Menelaus, in the *Posthomerica*, finds Helen hidden in the palace of Deiphobus ; astonishment takes possession of his soul before the shining of her beauty, so that he stands immovable, like a dead tree, which neither north nor south wind shakes. When the Greek heroes leave Troy town, Agamemnon leads Cassandra captive, Neoptolemus is followed by Andromache, and Hecuba weeps torrents of tears in the strong grasp of Odysseus. A crowd of Trojan women fill the air with shrill laments, tearing their tresses and strewing dust upon their heads. Meanwhile, Helen is delayed by no desire to wail or weep ; but a comely shame sits on her black eyes and glowing cheeks. Her heart leaps, and her whole form is as lovely as Aphrodite was when the gods discovered her with Ares in the net of Hephaistos. Down to the ships she comes with Menelaus hand in hand ; and the people, " gazing on the glory and the winning grace of the faultless woman, were astonished ; nor could they dare by whispers or aloud to humble her with insults : but gladly they saw in her a goddess, for she seemed to all what each desired." This is the apotheosis of Helen ; and this reading of her romance is far more true to the general current of Greek feeling than that suggested by Euripides. Theocritus, in his exquisite marriage song of Helen, has not a word to say by hint or innuendo that she will bring a curse upon her husband. Like dawn is the beauty of her face ; like the moon in the heaven of night, or the spring when winter is ended, or like a cypress in the meadow, so is Helen among Spartan maids. When Apollonius of Tyana, the most famous *medium* of antiquity, evoked the spirit of Achilles by the pillar on his barrow in the Troad, the great ghost consented to answer five questions. One of these concerned Helen : Did she really go to Troy ? Achilles indignantly repudiated the notion. She remained in Egypt ; and this the heroes of Achaia soon knew well ; " but we fought for fame and Priam's wealth."

It is curious at the point of transition in the Roman world from Paganism to Christianity to find the name of Helen prominent. Helena, the mother of Constantine, was famous with the early Church as a pilgrim to Jerusalem, where she discovered the true cross, and destroyed a temple of Venus. For one Helen, East and West had warred together on the plains of Troy. Following the steps of another Helen, West and East now disputed the possession of the Holy Sepulchre. Such historical parallels are, however, little better than puns. It is far more to the purpose to notice how the romance of Helen of Troy, after lying dormant during the middle ages, blazed forth again in the pregnant myth of Faustus. The final achievement of Faust's magic was to evoke Helen from the dead and hold her as his paramour. To the

beauty of Greek art the mediæval spirit stretched forth with yearning and begot the modern world. Marlowe, than whom no poet of the North throbbed more mightily with the passion of the Renaissance, makes his Faust exclaim :

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul : see, where it flies!
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy shall Wertenberg be sacked ;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest ;
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars ;
Brighter art thou than the flaming Jupiter
When he appeared to hapless Semele ;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azure arms ;
And none but thou shalt be my paramour.

Marlowe, as was natural, contented himself with an external handling of the Faust legend. Goethe allegorized the whole, and turned the episode of Helen into a parable of modern poetry. When Lynkeus, the warder, is reprimanded for not having duly asked Helen into the feudal castle, he defends himself thus :

Harrend auf des Morgens Wonne,
Oestlich spähend ihren Lauf,
Ging auf einmal mir die Sonne
Wunderbar im Süden auf.

Zog den Blick nach jener Seite,
Statt der Schluchten, statt der Höh'n,
Statt der Erd und Himmelsweite,
Sie, die Einzige, zu spähn.*

The new light that rose upon the middle ages came not from the East, but from the South, no longer from Galilee, but from Greece.

Thus, after living her long life in Hellas as the ideal of beauty, unqualified by moral attributes, Helen passed into modern mythology as the ideal of the beauty of the Pagan world. True to her old character, she arrives to us across the waters of oblivion with the cestus of the goddess

* " Eastward was my glance directed,
Watching for the sun's first rays ;
In the south—oh ! sight of wonder—
Rose the bright orb's sudden blaze.

Thither was my eye attracted ;
Vanished bay and mountain height,
Earth and heaven unseen and all things,
All but that enchanted light."—*Anster.*

round her waist, and the divine smile upon her lips. Age has not impaired her charm, nor has she learned the lesson of the Fall. Ever virginal and ever fair, she is still the slave of Aphrodite. In Helen we salute the indestructible Hellenic spirit.

A legend like that of Helen, which has played a part in the mythology of two ages, supplies fitting material for the highest artistic presentation. It would be difficult, for example, to find a better subject for a grand ballet; if the ballet could ever become, as seems not quite impossible, a work of serious art. Perhaps the best prospect for the music of the future is in the direction of the ballet. Music, after long subordinating itself to words in the Mass, the Oratorio, and the Opera, attained to freedom in the Symphony as developed by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. These masters proved that an orchestra can express the highest poetry of which the art of tone is capable. Yet there always remains something wanting to unassisted instrumental music. Powerfully as the instruments of the Symphony may affect the soul, both composer and audience have felt the need of external interpretation. What does the Symphony tell? The composer has a definite meaning to convey; each member of the audience has a definite impression to receive: yet such is the nature of musical sound that a vital connection can scarcely be established between the intention of the artist and the sensibility of the audience without an explanatory programme of some sort. Such a programme has hitherto been supplied, almost accidentally, by a name, as in the case of Beethoven's Pastoral and Heroic Symphonies, or by the subordination of the orchestral music to a dramatic idea, as in the case of all overtures. Would it not be possible to supply a living, moving, elastic programme of pantomime by restoring Terpsichore to her right place among the Muses? A legend like that of Helen is eminently suited to suggest a hundred symphonies of passion and emotion; its varied situations bring into play the whole range of human feelings: love, fear, grief, jealousy, athletic strife, the anguish of men and nations, the pathos of beauty in distress, the victory of heroes over death; of such spiritual stuff is its very substance woven. At the same time it admits of being represented on the stage in a succession of dances and impressive tableaux. Would it not be possible for the choreograph and the musician to meet upon this theatre of high interpretative art? I, for my part, can imagine nothing more æsthetically perfect than a drama without words, whereof the poem should be simple orchestral music, and the corporeal expression be supplied by scenery and dancing. Music is too emotionally free and evanescent to submit to any but a forced alliance with language. But it finds a whole rhythm of interpretative illustration in the movement of the limbs, the poses of the body, and the expression of the features. When Fedalma, in George Eliot's poem, descended to the dance, she felt the dignity of her artistic function: and to what sublime heights of dramatic representation might not a nature like hers arise, when supported by orchestras throbbing with the inbreathed passion of the soul of a Mozart? Preparations for the

ballet as a work of high art are not wanting. All visitors to Italy know the importance of the *Ballo* there ; a great poet, Heine, condescended to compose a ballet on Goethe's Faust. We only need that a musician of genius should apply himself to the work, and that the dancing element should be subordinated to the artistic effects aimed at by the Ton-Dichter. The myths of Helen and Psyche and Faust, the legend of St. Dorothy and Don Juan, the tales of Francesca and Juliet and Imogen, are fitted for this species of art, which would have for its sphere whatever belongs properly to the province of *das Ewigweibliche*.

Such reflections as these form a somewhat lyrical termination to a *causerie* on Helen, by leading the mind away into a region of thought only slenderly connected with the main subject. Yet one who has been long occupied with the memory of her, at once so shadowy and so real, trembling as it were upon the borderland of things and dreams, and growing into dazzling radiance from the mists of doubt and darkness, may seem in his imagination to see her loveliness float forth with wings of music on the ways of dancing. In other words, he is almost irresistibly compelled to think of her under the conditions of that art of which the ballet is the realisation.

J. A. S.

Luca Signorelli.

" Il Cortonese

Luca, d'ingegno et spirto pellegrino."

—GIOVANNI SANTI.

FAME is partial, blowing one name far and wide, and never putting trump to lip for the sake of another little less worthy. She flatters the greatest, but neglects others all but as great. Those who lead the way she forgets, those who follow it at their ease she remembers; mindful of the reapers, forgetful of the sowers; kind to those that enter into an inheritance, cold to those whose labour stored it up. All perfection is acquired by inheritance. Perfection in the fine arts, above all, is but the crown one generation puts on the efforts of many that have gone before. In the fine arts, accordingly, the partiality of fame is most conspicuous. She gives all the glory to the one crowning generation, the fortunate heir of the rest. Thus the name of Michelangelo is a name of power over all the globe. The fourth century since his birth is passing away as I write, men acclaim so great an anniversary, and his memory moves on into ever widening cycles of renown. That is very just. But it is not just that the name of his chief forerunner should be familiar only to a handful of students. The forerunner of Michelangelo, and in part his model, was Luca Signorelli. The more you learn of that painter, the more you will recognise how it was in his hands that the art grew ripe for its astounding and perilous climax in the Sixtine Chapel. Until you know him, that climax cannot but seem to you like something sudden, which it was not, and unprepared, whereas it had been prepared by many, but in the chief and last degree by Luca Signorelli. To tell his story here will feel like helping him, in a humble way, from his place in the dim chambers of curiosity towards the place which ought to be his in the open mansions of popular fame.

I.

We saw of Piero della Francesca, a month or two ago, how he was one of the influential painters of Italy in the middle of the fifteenth century, and the first through whom the genius and science of Florence took effect upon the provincial workmen of the Umbrian Apennines. Luca Signorelli was the most distinguished scholar of Piero della Francesca, and holds out one hand to him while he holds out the other to Michelangelo. Luca is called Cortonese, Cortonensis, Coritius, or da Cortona, from his native city on the confines of the ancient provinces of Umbria and Etruria. Cortona,

within the ruined circuit of its mighty mediæval and mightier Etruscan walls, occupies the upper ledges of a mountain, which is itself the western spur of a larger mountain, at the point where the Apennines close in upon the southern extremity of the Valdichiana. Arezzo, where Piero della Francesca did his greatest work, is twenty miles off to the north, Perugia half as much again to the south. The city of Cortona is so old and small, it seems shrunk up with age. As you climb to it from the plain, you pass first of all the great outlying church of St. Maria del Calcinaio, built in Signorelli's own time by an architect from Siena, with the severe pomp and symmetry of the early Renaissance. A few turns of the zigzag ascent above this church give you a bird's-eye view down upon its roofs and dome, and presently bring you to the entrance of the town. You climb the steep streets from point to point, and pause upon the clearings before one dismantled church after another, until you come to the last church of all, which belongs to the great convent endowed by the people of Cortona in honour of St. Margaret, a glory of their city and of the Franciscan order. But higher yet than the church and convent of St. Margaret of Cortona, towers the fortress. From the summit of the fortress, the city is but a reddish grey cascade of crumbling roofs at your feet; you look down beyond it upon the fertile level of the Valdichiana, all traced and netted over with rows of the mulberry and the vine-bearing maple—an endless geometry, or ending only among the heavings of the horizon hills. In the western distance, loftier and of lovelier outline than all hills beside, the peak of Amiata mingles fair and fabulous with the blue. Here and there on plain or ridge you are aware of some hamlet that may have been a mighty city in days when Rome was an outlaw's refuge. Here and there a streak of light is a distant lake. Far away among the mountains on the right, you know that the Tiber and the Arno rise. And beyond the dark Apennine shoulder that thrusts itself forward on your left, you look down on one half of Thrasimene, the lake of slaughter, of all lakes to-day the most fair and peaceful, and casting up to heaven an azure the purest without flaw.

This old city was not one of those that took a leading part in the history of Italian politics or culture. Lying in a region of which the sovereignty was perpetually disputed between the larger republics, the Church, or this or that champion of the Church and this or that adventurer fighting on his own account or as the nominal delegate of the Empire, the signory of the city passed from one hand to another, until at the beginning of the fifteenth century the republic of Florence bought it for a sum of money from Ladislaus, King of Naples. The purchase was a matter of much rejoicing at Florence, even though it fell between two far more important territorial acquisitions of the republic, those of Pisa and Leghorn. It will have been soon after the purchase that a certain pilgrimage took place which gives Cortona a part it is pleasant to remember in the classical revival of Italy. At all times rare fragments of antiquity have been apt to turn up under the plough or spade in the neighbourhood. One of

these is a Roman sarcophagus with a fine bas-relief of Centaurs and Lapithæ. It was found early in the Middle Age, and built, as such fragments often were built, with care into the inner face of the Cathedral wall. Full of the legends of Thrasimene, the people have dubbed it the sarcophagus of the Consul Flaminius. It happened one day, in the first fever of the antiquarian passion at Florence, that Donatello told his friend Brunelleschi how on his way back from Rome he had seen this monument at Cortona and what a marvel of beauty it was. The next thing that was seen of Brunelleschi was his producing in company, a few days later, a fine pen drawing of the monument in question. He had been fired, it appeared, by Donatello's description, and had gone off "as he was, without saying a word, in his town-going cloak and cap and shoes," and had made his way to Cortona on foot, sixty hilly miles, and done his drawing and come back again.

But Cortona was now to win a higher distinction in the history of the Renaissance. For here lived a citizen named Egidio di Ventura Signorelli, who had taken a wife from the neighbouring town of Arezzo. She was named Elisabetta, and belonged to that family of the Vasari which was afterwards destined to become famous in the person of Giorgio Vasari the biographer. Her brother Lazzaro Vasari was a designer and manufacturer of pottery in Arezzo, and was the very good friend of Piero della Francesca. In 1441 Elisabetta bore her husband a son who was christened Luca. This boy, Luca Signorelli, would be twelve years old or upwards at the time when Piero della Francesca was busy over his great work at Arezzo. Through the good offices of his uncle Lazzaro Vasari, Luca got apprenticed to that master. How long his service lasted we cannot tell, but long enough to teach the pupil all the master knew, in anatomy, in perspective, in classical antiquities, and the other sciences in which Piero was proficient beyond his age. To grapple with and conquer the real human body as it is, to explore its structure, and delineate its parts and surfaces with the new power which knowledge of structure gives, that is the main acquisition with which Luca began his independent career. For the rest, his taste and his teacher's are different enough. Piero, as we saw, loved collected strength; men, maidens, angels standing upright and unalarmed; gestures and countenances bold but calm. The representation of strength in motion, and motion of the superlative degree, was what Luca was destined to achieve. Piero is one of the sweetest and most inventive of colourists. In Luca the old Italian delight in colour has gone dim: at his best, indeed, he will strike chords of power and solemnity, but is apt to range among heavy olive greens and reds that are somewhat raw and dull.

The traces of his early career are scanty. At thirty-three, he was still painting in the provincial towns near his home. It was probably about 1475 that he went to Florence. Here the first artists of the time soon acknowledged him their equal. He made one of the great group who covered chapel walls and filled palace chambers with their handiwork

during the years when Italy was most prodigal of genius, and when the best genius of Italy gathered itself in the service and friendship of the ugly merchant, the amorous poet, the sleepless politician, the magnificent amateur, who was the unofficial hereditary dictator of Florence. Two of the most interesting of Signorelli's extant works were commissions done for the villa of Lorenzo de' Medici at Castello. I mean, first, a Madonna which hangs in the corridor of the Uffizj, and next, a precious School of Pan, which the late direction of the English National Gallery (alas! alas!) let slip through its fingers to be picked up by the better advised authorities of Berlin. In that early Madonna of Signorelli, the spiritual parent of Michelangelo announces himself already to those who can understand. There is nothing unusual in the figure of the Virgin in dark red and dark blue, who as she sits turns half round to hold with both hands the child standing at her feet. What is unusual is the little group in the background. For the customary shepherds, there stand four naked figures modelled in strong light and shade, and showing that this, the unclothed frame and anatomy of men, is the thing the painter cares for and will have wherever he can get it. Go now into the Tribune close by, and look at the Madonna painted by Michelangelo himself for Angelo Doni some thirty years later; are not the mysterious naked men who lean about the background of that celebrated work the direct descendants of these anatomies of Signorelli? And again, Signorelli has painted above his Madonna some imitation stone-work with medallions of Prophets in relief; do we not seem to discern in these a germ, if a meagre germ, of those mighty inventions, mock-marble effigies of Prophet and Sibyl and supporter, heroic nameless shapes of superhuman striving and defiance, that dominate our astonished spirits from their station aloft amid the vaultings of the Sistine chapel? The second picture I have named, the School of Pan, with naked nymphs and shepherds about the god, must be the best and most graceful piece of work ever done by Signorelli in the other vein, in the classic and mythologic vein, of the Renaissance. I know it not in the original.*

For the next score of years, no more is to be said of Signorelli than that he holds his place among the most honoured painters of his genera-

* It was habitual in Signorelli, more than in most artists, to repeat his own compositions or parts of them, and often at very wide intervals in his career. Pan among the Nymphs he repeated at the beginning of the next century, making the subject one of a series in fresco which he painted together with Pinturicchio for the house Pandolfo Petrucci in Siena. This version of the Pan subject is destroyed, but others of the same series have been preserved, and one of them, with a companion of Pinturicchio, was last year bought for the National Gallery, and is the single example of the master there. The Duke of Hamilton's picture presently to be mentioned was exhibited at Burlington House in 1873. A genuine but unrecognised fragment was numbered 177 in the Exhibition of this year. In the gallery of the Arundel Society are some very careful and excellent water-colour drawings after the frescoes of the master, two from the series at Monte Oliveto and four from Orvieto. And this, so far as I know, is all that accessibly represents him in this country.

tion, which was the crowning generation but one in Italian art. It is strange that so little of his work has found its way abroad. Italy, at least Tuscany with Umbria, is full of it. Besides many more pictures in Florence, he painted in the famous shrine of Our Lady of Loreto, and in the chapel, then new, of Pope Sixtus at the Vatican. Sixtus IV. was the first pope of the house of Della Rovere, and the cardinal Giuliano, destined in his old age to be the second pope of that house under the title of Julius II., had been Signorelli's patron at Loreto before Sixtus called him to Rome. Signorelli's angels are still to be seen at Loreto, dim with the smoke of incessant worship. In the Sistine chapel his great fresco of the life of Moses stands among the rest painted at the same time by Ghirlandaio, Botticelli, and Perugino. And there are altar-pieces of his in almost every town that lay within two days' journey of his home. To know all the Signorellis of this class is to have travelled—the happiest work in the world—to every nook and corner of that beloved land, from Florence in the north to Volterra on the west, to Orvieto on the south, to the Adriatic on the east, with Perugia, Arezzo, Castel Fiorentino, and the little towns beside the head waters of the Tiber for an inner circle of your explorations, and Cortona, richest of all in the works of her famous son, for their centre. Of these altar-pieces I must not speak in detail. Speaking generally, I think the student will find them a little disappointing. Necessarily they belong to a traditional class of subject. They are Nativities or Depositions or Entombments, or else those devotional schemes of Madonna and Child in glory in mid air, with saints worshipping on the ground below and angels ministering out of heaven above. If you look for energy, dignity, a manly temper, vigorous and highly-trained draughtsmanship, figures strongly designed and draperies broadly cast, you will find them in abundance. But compare Signorelli with those of his contemporaries who had the real genius for devotional art. Compare him with Perugino; and how you will miss the intellectual refinement, the adoring knees and eyes in bland consent with the grace of softly poised heads and softly folded hands, and all the rapt serenity of those holy personages set fairly apart in a holy world, beneath a heaven of ineffable light and azure gradation, and before a spacious distance of solemn lake and sleeping promontory. Compare him with Botticelli; and where is the fire, the passion of beauty and the passion of melancholy; where are the quires that circle midway between the green earth and the golden concave? where is the rain of roses, the lovely interchange of rose-colour and bronze and blue and white and amber in the celestial raiment, the rhythm of flowing skirts and floating locks, the hands laid lovingly together, and those white wistful looks of yearning and compassion? None of these things are here; nor yet the lovely colouring of the other two, each after his choice; nor their exquisite delicacy and fond precision in the painting of ornaments and details. What instead?

The superior mastery and energy of which I have spoken, but which does not seem altogether at ease in this kind of work. Signorelli's Virgins

rest heavily, on mats, often, of ugly coloured cherubs' heads; Virgins and children are both apt to be dull: they want those inspirations of tenderness which often give a charm to the work of quite simple painters. His compositions of saints and angels are unequal, but on the whole apt to be somewhat heavy, crowded, and angular; he somehow has not got the true secret of these things and their combination. This or that bishop or martyr or doctor will be splendidly designed and painted, but from want of knowing exactly what to make him do—from want, that is, of religious imagination and religious motive—it will happen that all this power looks misplaced or ostentatious. By looking ostentatious, I mean that a limb, a hand, will be expressed in a difficult attitude, with the most forcible technical completeness, when it is without any equivalent force or appropriateness of purpose. The angels are often of splendid beauty, but of a mien too bold and haughty for angels, a beauty too warlike or carnal, and with a build too athletic and a tread too firm to float on clouds. Or if Signorelli tries, as he constantly does, to add to such beings the devout graces that come naturally to the Perugian, or to lesser Umbrians—if he would abase their brows in humility, or clasp their hands in worship, or droop their heads in contemplation—then his work ceases to look spontaneous and all of a piece; you are aware of a native and of a foreign element side by side, and this is fatal to the spiritual harmony a picture ought to have. His heart is not in the humilities. His great successes are in the frames of weather-beaten grey-headed penitents, an Adam or a Jerome; in the passion of a mourning John or the vehement gesture of a wailing Mary beside the cross; in the strength and heartiness of a lusty naked Christopher; in the clerly gravity of an Augustine or a Gregory, with their gorgeous gold-embroidered and figured vestments; or in the animated little background groups of soldiers about a Crucifixion. In these things he is never weak or forced. Sometimes, where the object does not call for much sentiment or tenderness, an altar-piece of his will be nobly complete and dignified throughout, as in the great Circumcision of the Hamilton Palace collection, formerly at Volterra, which is one of the finest of its class.

II.

With such works, I say, Luca Signorelli held his place for twenty years or more. And then, when he was fifty-six, came the opportunity that first encouraged his true bent. He was summoned to paint part of a sacred history for the monks of a famous convent near Siena. Now, of all the republics of Italy, Siena was at the same time the most insanely turbulent and the most fervently devout. The lives of her citizens were strangely divided between civil anarchy and religious exaltation. Her annals teem with histories of saints, men or women upon whom the call came in the midst of a patriotic, a violent, a dissolute, or a worldly career. One of these had been Bernardo Tolomei, the most distinguished member of a

distinguished house, and a great public teacher of law in the University of Siena towards the beginning of the fourteenth century. Suddenly his heart smote him. He put away the worldly and embraced the heavenly calling. With two friends of birth equal to his own, he went out into the most desolate part of the desolate chalk hills to the south of the city. Here the three lived the lives of hermits; and presently their example converted others. Disciples assembled; lands and money were bequeathed. A new order of monks was founded according to the rule of the Benedictines, as reformed for their special observance, and was called, in consequence of a vision vouchsafed to its founder, the order of the Mount of Olives. This institution of the Olivetine monks in time spread all over Italy, and even north of the Alps. But the parent house among the chalk-hills of the Siennese province near Chiusuri remained the central and governing convent of the order, and is called to this day by the name of Monte Oliveto Maggiore. Within a hundred and fifty years of its foundation, pious bequests had nourished it into an establishment of great magnificence. The vast enclosures and courts and campaniles in red brick are sequestered amid an artificial oasis in that land of arid heat and soapy shapeless lumps, not hills. Let me not give my own account of the place, but copy that of a genial traveller and observer of the fifteenth century, whose description is as good to-day as when it was written, except that in the place of the old hospitable throng of pious inmates a poor half-dozen monks, deprived of their historic dress, are left alone now, with their lands appropriated by the State, their gardens dismantled and reduced. Aeneas Sylvius, the accomplished humanist and diplomatist who was pope under the title of Pius II., had occasion to visit the convent. Approaching it from the south, he complains of the paths cut in the chalky clay, and only fit to be ridden in the droughts of summer. "A horse's hoofs sink into the earth, and he can only pull them out again by a great effort. The rains have channelled deep trenches on this side and on that, only leaving narrow paths which you keep to with great difficulty; and if you tread ever so little on one side, down you roll. Well, we reached the monastery called Monte Oliveto, which lies not far from the little town of Chiusuri, where they make a cheese which the people of Tuscany think excellent. The site of the monastery is like this. You have a high hill of chalk and tufa about a furlong in length, much less in width, and shaped like a chestnut-leaf (*i.e.* a narrow and pointed oval). On all sides steep rocks hang above ravines into which you may well shudder to look down. A narrow neck or ridge joins this hill to the rest of the land, and at this point is built a brick tower which stops the approach to all but friends. Midway upon the slope of the hill is built a noble church, and beside it the chambers, cloisters, and corridors of the monks; with all kinds of offices necessary for men of religion; nothing that is not handsome, nothing that is not neatly kept, nothing that you may not look on with envy." Then he gives an account of the origin of the establishment, and derives its name, not quite accurately, from the number of olives culti-

vated there ; adding, "There are also figs and almonds, and many kinds of pears and apples, and groves of cypresses in which you may take the air pleasantly in summer. Vineyards too, and walks in the shade of vine-leaves ; and vegetable gardens, and pools for washing, and a perennial spring, and tanks, and wells ; and groves of oak and juniper growing upon the very rock itself. And a number of walks, wide enough for two abreast, wind about or cut across the hill, with borders of vines or rose-trees or rosemary on either side. Pleasaunces delightful for the monks—more delightful still for those that having seen are free to go elsewhere." So with a sly touch the busy shepherd of the faithful takes his leave. Much has he seen and known, cities of men, and manners, climates, counsels, governments ; much hopes he yet to have before him ; not to his mind is the quiet of the cloistered life, solitude or inaction or irresponsibility.

It was about five-and-thirty years after this visit of Pius II. that the fathers of Monte Oliveto determined to have the chief cloister of their convent adorned with paintings. What subject so fit for them to contemplate as they paced those deep arcades—what so full both of entertainment and edification—as the miraculous career of St. Benedict, the great father of their own order and of western monachism ? Accordingly the story of St. Benedict, exactly as you read it in the second book of the Dialogues of Gregory the Great, and as you may fancy some white-robed superior of the brotherhood dictating it to the artist off a manuscript from the convent library, stands painted scene by scene round the four walls of the cloister. Three sides out of the four are the work of the Sienese master Sodoma, with whom to-day we have nothing to do. The fourth side was painted by Luca Signorelli in 1497. And this is the place where, in spite of fading and decay, you may see his genius for the first time seeming quite happy in its task. There are eight stories in eight compartments, taken from eight successive chapters of Gregory's Dialogue. In these Gregory tells how, the old enemy having persuaded an envious brother to poison Benedict, the saint was saved from the poison by miraculous agency, but made up his mind nevertheless to leave those brethren and take up his abode elsewhere ; and as he was starting, the news was brought him how the wicked priest had fallen from a loggia and been killed ; but not for that would Benedict change his purpose. Next how, having determined to found a new convent on the site of a temple of Apollo at Monte Cassino, he preached to the pagan inhabitants and converted them, and caused his followers to pull down the idol of the false god. Then, how his followers could by no means lift a certain stone which he directed them to use for the building ; whereby it was clear that the old enemy in person must be sitting upon that stone ; and how Benedict being sent for exorcised the old enemy, and the stone being lifted up an idol of bronze was found under it ; and that idol being thrown aside in the kitchen, suddenly in the eyes of the brethren a phantom fire seemed to be kindled and to threaten the building with destruction ; but Benedict was aware that it was no fire but a mischievous device of the old enemy. Fourthly, how

the evil one planned a new assault, and cast down a wall the brethren were building, so that it crushed one of them and killed him, and how Benedict restored him to life. How two brethren broke the rules of their order by eating in the house of a woman without the precincts of the convent, and how Benedict by his miraculous knowledge convicted them. How by the same miraculous knowledge he was aware of the backsliding of a pilgrim, the brother of one of his monks, who was wont to come once each year fasting and see his brother and receive the blessing of the Saint, but who this year had been tempted by the old enemy, in the guise of a fellow-pilgrim, to break his fast by the way. Seventhly, how Totila, king of the Goths, having heard of the spirit of prophecy which was in Benedict, and wishing to try him, bade his chief officer Riggo put on the royal apparel and go at the head of the royal guard and present himself before Benedict in all things as though he were the king; and how Benedict, as the false Totila drew near, called out with a loud voice, "Son, put off that which is not thine." And lastly how Totila, astonished at this miracle, came himself to the Saint with all his warriors, and fell down before him, and would hardly be persuaded to rise from his knees.

Here, it is evident, is scope enough for freedom, for vivacity, for the energetic representation of life and incident. Signorelli revels in it. He plans the perspective of his landscapes so as to give room, in the rear of the main subject which fills the foreground of each compartment, for other animated subjects which serve as preface or sequel to it. Often these distant episodes are brilliant little compositions in themselves, always they enter in the liveliest way into the spirit of the story, its simple thaumatrgy and childish materialism. Brown imps and blue fly away with the wicked monk's soul. The old enemy sits visibly on the stone they cannot move, or swaggers fiercely with his crowbar in the act to overthrow the wall that is to kill the young disciple. Draperies whirl and bodies slant with speed as monk and cook and scullion run to and fro with pitchers to extinguish the phantom fire. Where the truant monks eat out of bounds, a lad keeping watch at the door against an alarm, the women who are waiting or move up and down a staircase in the rear, are figures of admirable spirit and reality; and a little corner is kept in the distance to show how submissively the truants plump down on their unlucky knees when they get home and know they are found out. The pilgrim and his tempter hobnob across a wooden table in a grassy place with the most animated air. Totila's men in outlandish armour go to and fro before their tents in the distance, or ride fiercely, driving before them a troop of bound and cringing captives. So much for the quality of the background and accessory scenes, where they are not too much defaced for study—and the earlier pictures of the series are both slighter and more injured than the later. In the foreground, the Saint and his companions perpetually group into noble masses of heavy white drapery, for they are represented, not in the black gown proper to the original order of the Benedictines, but in the white gown which had been assumed by

this reformed branch of the order. Bald or white-headed, shaven or bearded, young or old, their heads are individual studies, not of sanctity or austerity or adoration, but of bronzed and weather-beaten strength; and as such are studies wrought out and modelled with extraordinary power. Where the Saint preaches to the pagan inhabitants of Monte Cassino, we see at last what the painter cares more about even than groups of bronzed and goodly monks in their white robes. His pagans are people of splendid apparel and fair countenances and majestic bearing, in whom he has taken extreme delight. But if you want to realise to the full how the spirit of the time worked in Signorelli, how he represents the Renaissance in its love of physical energy and life, stop at the last two subjects, which are much better preserved as well as more characteristic than the rest. Totila in one, Riggo his chief captain in the other, leads the van of a long array of mounted and dismounted knights and pages and men-at-arms. Here is occasion for the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Each retinue is nothing but a company of portraits—portraits of such beautiful and fiery and reckless human beings as in the cities round about were wont to make the air at sundown ring with revelry, and before dawn with the clash of deadly brawl or treason deadlier still. Lithe, tall, athletic, high-bred, compact of flesh like steel, Signorelli has drawn them as the frames of men were never drawn before. The close-fitting fashions of the time, hose and jackets all variegated with flaming and fantastic patterns in white and blue and scarlet, are no disguise of the supple limbs and tense sinews, no veil of the bodies so terrible and perfect. Such apparel only adds to the wearer some blazonry the more of audacity and defiance. Defiant or merely disdainful with that physical disdain of strength and untamed blood, the young men stand among their elders with one hand on sword-hilt or hip, the beautiful head with its careless looks and rippling gold hair set haughtily on the springy neck, the whole fierce and radiant animal alert for pleasure or for blood. Now, then, you understand what features and figures Signorelli took to most naturally. You see what models he was most familiar with in the young men of the cities about his home.* Knowing what these lawless young lords were like in their lives, and seeing here how he felt their beauty and represented it, you cease to wonder if the angels in his altar-pieces have seemed to you over-bold and over-strong, and if you have thought gestures of humbleness and pity out of keeping with those warrior profiles, those unabashed brows and backward-rolling yellow locks.

S.C.

* Mr. J. A. Symonds has seen and made this point in the chapters on Orvieto and Perugia (the latter, I think, the more just and spirited of the two) in his interesting volume of *Sketches and Studies in Italy and Greece*.

(To be continued.)

Hours in a Library.

No. X.—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

THERE are few great books or great men that do not sadden us by a sense of incompleteness. The writer, we feel, is better than his work. His full power only reveals itself by flashes. There are blemishes in his design, due to mere oversight or indolence; his energy has flagged, or he has alloyed his pure gold to please the mob; or some burst of wayward passion has disturbed the fair proportions of his work. The man himself is a half-finished or half-ruined fragment. The rough usage of the world leaves its mark on the spiritual constitution of even the strongest and best amongst us; and perhaps the finest natures suffer more than others in virtue of their finer sympathies. *Hamlet* is a pretty good performance, if we make allowances; but what would it have been if Shakspeare could have been at his highest level all through, and if every element of strength in him had been purified from every weakness? What would it have been, shall we say, if he could have had the advantage of reading a few modern lectures on æsthetics? We may, perhaps, be content with Shakspeare as circumstances left him; but in reading our modern poets, the sentiment of regret is stronger. If Byron had not been driven into his wild revolt against the world; if Shelley had been judiciously treated from his youth; if Keats had had healthier lungs; if Wordsworth had not grown rusty in his solitude; if Scott had not been tempted into publishers' speculations; if Coleridge had never taken to opium; what great poems might not have opened the modern era of literature, where now we have but incomplete designs, and listen to harmonies half-destroyed by internal discord? The regret, however, is less when a man has succeeded in uttering the thought that was in him, though it may never have found a worthy expression. Wordsworth could have told us little more though the *Excursion* had been as complete a work as *Paradise Lost*; and if Scott might have written us more *Antiquaries* and *Old Mortalities*, he could hardly have written better ones. But the works of some other writers suggest possibilities which never even approached fulfilment. If the opinion formed by his contemporaries of Coleridge be anywhere near the truth, we lost in him a potential philosopher of a very high order, as we more clearly lost a poet of singular fascination. Coleridge naturally suggests the name of De Quincey, whose works are as often tantalizing as satisfying. And to make, it is true, a considerable drop from the greatest of these names, we often feel when we take up one of Hazlitt's glowing Essays, that here, too, was a man who might have made a far more

enduring mark as a writer of English prose. At their best, his writings are admirable; they have the true stamp; the thought is masculine and the expression masterly; phrases engrave themselves on the memory; and we catch glimpses of a genuine thinker and no mere manufacturer of literary commonplace. On a more prolonged study, it is true, we become conscious of many shortcomings, and the general effect is somehow rather cloying, though hardly from an excess of sweetness. And yet he deserves the attention both of the critic and the student of character.

The story of Hazlitt's life has been told by his grandson; but there is a rather curious defect of materials for so recent a biography. He kept, it seems, no letters—a weakness, if it be a weakness, for which one is rather apt to applaud him in these days; but, on the other hand, nobody ever indulged more persistently in the habit of washing his dirty linen in public. Not even his idol Rousseau could be more demonstrative of his feelings and recollections. His writings are autobiographical, sometimes even offensively; and after reading them we are even more familiar than his contemporaries with many points of his character. He loved to pour himself out in his Essays

as plain

As downright Shippen or as old Montaigne.

He has laid bare for the most careless reader the main elements of his singular composition. Like some others of his revolutionary friends, Godwin, for example, Leigh Hunt, and Tom Paine, he represents the old dissenting spirit in a new incarnation. The grandfather a stern Calvinist, the father a Unitarian, the son a freethinker; those were the gradations through which more than one family passed during the closing years of the last century and the opening of this. One generation still clung to the old Puritan traditions and Jonathan Edwards; the next followed Priestley; and the third joined the little band of radicals who read Cobbett, scorned Southey as a deserter, and refused to be frightened by the French revolution. The outside crust of opinion may be shed with little change to the inner man. Hazlitt was a dissenter to his backbone. He was born to be in a minority; to be a living protest against the dominant creed and constitution. He recognized and denounced, but he never shook off, the faults characteristic of small sects. A want of wide intellectual culture, and a certain sourness of temper, cramped his powers and sometimes marred his writing. But from his dissenting forefathers Hazlitt inherited something better. Beside the huge tomes of controversial divinity on his father's shelves, the *Patres Poloni*, Pripacovius, Crellius, and Cracovius, Lardner and Doddridge, and Baxter and Bates, and Howe, were the legends of the Puritan hagiology. The old dissenters, he tells us, had Neale's *History of the Puritans* by heart, and made their children read Calamy's account of the 2,000 ejected ministers along with the stories of Daniel in the Lion's den and Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego. Sympathy for the persecuted, unbending resistance to the oppressor, was the creed which had passed into their blood. "This covenant they kept

as the stars keep their courses; this principle they stuck by, for want of knowing better, as it sticks by them to the last. It grew with their growth, it does not wither in their decay. . . It glimmers with the last feeble eyesight, smiles in the faded cheek like infancy, and lights a path before them to the grave. This"—for Hazlitt has a personal application for all his moralising—"this is better than the whirligig life of a court poet"—such, for example, as Robert Southey.

But Hazlitt's descent was not pure. If we could trace back the line of his ancestry we should expect to find that, by some freak of fortune, one of the rigid old Puritans had married a descendant of some great Flemish or Italian painter. Love of graceful forms and bright colouring and voluptuous sensations had been transmitted to their descendants, though hitherto repressed by the stern discipline of British nonconformity. As the discipline relaxed, the Hazlitts reverted to the ancestral type. Hazlitt himself, his brother and his sister, were painters by instinct. The brother became a painter of miniatures by profession; and Hazlitt to the end of his days revered Titian almost as much as he revered his great idol Napoleon. An odd pair of idols, one thinks, for a youth brought up upon Pripescovius and his brethren! A keen delight in all artistic and natural beauty were awkward endowments for a youth intended for the ministry. Keats was scarcely more out of place in a surgery than Hazlitt would have been in a Unitarian pulpit of those days, and yet from that pulpit, oddly enough, came the greatest impulse to his development. It came from a man who, like Hazlitt himself, though in a higher degree than Hazlitt, combined the artistic and the philosophic temperament. Coleridge, as Hazlitt somewhere says, threw a great stone into the standing pool of contemporary thought; and it was in January, 1798—one of the many dates in his personal history to which he recurs with unceasing fondness—that Hazlitt rose before daylight and walked ten miles in the mud to hear Coleridge preach. He has told, in his graphic manner, how the voice of the preacher "rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes;" how he launched into his subject, in giving out the text, "like an eagle dallying with the wind;" and how his young hearer seemed to be listening to the music of the spheres, to see the union of poetry and philosophy and of truth and genius embracing under the eye of religion. This description of the youthful Coleridge has a fit pendant in the wonderful description of the full-blown philosopher in Mr. Carlyle's *Life of Stirling*; where, indeed, one or two touches are taken from Hazlitt's Essays. It is Hazlitt who remarked, even at this early meeting, that the dreamy poet philosopher could never decide on which side of the footpath he should walk; and Hazlitt who struck out the epigram that Coleridge was an excellent talker if allowed to start from no premisses and come to no conclusion. The glamour of Coleridge's theosophy never seems to have fascinated Hazlitt's stubborn intellect. At this time, indeed, Coleridge had not yet been inoculated with German mysticism. In after years, the disciple, according to his custom, renounced

his master and assailed him with half-regretful anger. But the intercourse and kindly encouragement of so eminent a man seems to have roused Hazlitt's ambition. His poetical and his speculative intellect were equally stirred. The youth was already longing to write a philosophical treatise. The two elements of his nature thus roused to action led him along a "strange diagonal." He would be at once a painter and a metaphysician. Some eight years of artistic labour convinced him that he could not be a Titian or a Raphael, and he declined to be a mere Hazlitt junior. His metaphysical studies, on the contrary, convinced him that he might be a Hume or a Berkeley; but unluckily they convinced himself alone. The tiny volume which contained their results was neglected by everybody but the author, who, to the end of his days, loved it with the love of a mother for a deformed child. It is written, to say the truth, in a painful and obscure style; it is the work of a man who has brooded over his own thoughts in solitude till he cannot appreciate the need of a clear exposition. The narrowness of his reading had left him in ignorance of the new aspects under which the eternal problems were presenting themselves to the new generation; and a metaphysical discussion in antiquated phraseology is as useless as a lady's dress in the last year's fashion. Hazlitt, in spite of this double failure, does not seem to have been much disturbed by impecuniosity; but the most determined Bohemian has to live. For some years he strayed about the purlieus of literature, drudging, translating, and doing other cobbler's work. Two of his performances, however, were characteristic; he wrote an attack upon Malthus and he made an imprudent marriage. Even Malthusians must admit that imprudent marriages may have some accidental good consequences. When a man has fairly got his back to the wall, he is forced to fight; and Hazlitt, at the age of thirty-four, with a wife and a son, at last discovered the great secret of the literary profession, that a clever man can write when he has to write or starve. To compose had been labour and grief to him, so long as he could potter round a thought indefinitely; but with the printer's devil on one side and the demands of a family on the other, his ink began to flow freely, and during the last sixteen or seventeen years of his life he became a voluminous though fragmentary author. Several volumes of essays, lectures, and criticisms, besides his more ambitious *Life of Napoleon*, and a great deal of anonymous writing, attest his industry. He died in 1830, at the age of fifty-two; leaving enough to show that he could have done more, and a good deal of rare, if not the highest kind of excellence.

Hazlitt, as I have said, is everywhere autobiographical. Besides that secret, that a man can write if he must, he had discovered the further secret, that the easiest of all topics is his own feelings. It is an apparent paradox, though the explanation is not far to seek, that Hazlitt, though shy with his friends, was the most unreserved of writers. Indeed he takes the public into his confidence with a facility which we cannot easily forgive. Biographers of late have been guilty of flagrant violations of the

unwritten code which should protect the privacies of social life from the intrusions of public curiosity. But the most unscrupulous of biographers would hardly have dared to tear aside the veil so audaciously as Hazlitt, in one conspicuous instance at least, chose to do for himself. His idol Rousseau had indeed gone further; but when Rousseau told the story of his youth, it was at least seen through a long perspective of years, and his own personality might seem to be scarcely interested. Hazlitt chose, in the strange book called the *New Pygmalion, or Liber Amoris*, to invite the British public at large to look on at a strange tragi-comedy, of which the last scene was scarcely finished. Hazlitt had long been unhappy in his family life. His wife appears to have been a masculine woman, with no talent for domesticity; completely indifferent to her husband's pursuits, and inclined to despise him for so fruitless an employment of his energies. They had already separated, it seems, when Hazlitt fell desperately in love with Miss Sarah Walker, the daughter of his lodging-house keeper. The husband and wife agreed to obtain a divorce under the Scotch law, after which they might follow their own path, and Sarah Walker become the second Mrs. Hazlitt. Some months had to be spent by Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt in Edinburgh, with a view to this arrangement. The lady's journal records her impressions; which, it would seem, strongly resembled those of a tradesman getting rid of a rather flighty and imprudent partner in business. She is extremely precise as to all pecuniary and legal details; she calls upon her husband now and then, takes tea with him, makes an off-hand remark or two about some picture-gallery which he had been visiting, and tells him that he has made a fool of himself, with the calmness of a lady dismissing a troublesome servant, or a schoolmaster parting from an ill-behaved pupil. And meanwhile, in queer contrast, Hazlitt was pouring out to his friends letters which seem to be throbbing with unrestrainable passion. He is raving as Romeo at Mantua might have raved of Juliet. To hear Miss Walker called his wife will be music to his ears, such as they never heard. But it seems doubtful whether, after all, his Juliet will have him. He shrieks mere despair and suicide. Nothing is left in the world to give him a drop of comfort. The breeze does not cool him nor the blue sky delight him. He will never lie down at night nor rise up of a morning in peace, nor even behold his little boy's face with pleasure unless he is restored to her favour. And Mrs. Hazlitt reports, after acknowledging a receipt of 10*l.*, that Mr. Hazlitt was so much "enamoured" of one of these letters that he pulled it out of his pocket twenty times a day, wanted to read it to his companions, and ranted and gesticulated till people took him for a madman. The *Liber Amoris* is made out of these letters—more or less altered and disguised, with some reports of conversations with the lovely Sarah. "It was an explosion of frenzy," says De Quincey; his reckless mode of relieving his bosom of certain perilous stuff, with little care whether it produced scorn or sympathy. A passion, at least, which urges its victim to such improprieties should be deep and genuine. One would have liked him

better if he had not taken his frenzy to market. The *Liber Amoris* tells us accordingly that the author, Hazlitt's imaginary double, died abroad, "of disappointment preying on a sickly frame and morbid state of mind." The hero, in short, breaks his heart when the lady marries somebody else. The real Hazlitt's heart was more elastic. Sarah Walker married, and Hazlitt next year married a widow lady "of some property," whom he met in a coach, made a tour with her on the Continent, and then—quarrelled with her also. It is not a pretty story. Hazlitt's biographer informs us, by way of excuse, that his grandfather was "physically incapable"—whatever that may mean—"of fixing his affection upon a single object." He "comprehended," indeed, "the worth of constancy" and other virtues as well as most men, and could have written about them better than most men; but somehow "a sinister influence or agency," or, in other words, a sensuous temperament, was perpetually present, which confined his virtues to the sphere of theory. An apology sometimes is worse than a satire. The case, however, seems to be sufficiently plain. We need not suspect that Hazlitt was consciously acting a part and nursing his "frenzy" because he thought that it would make a startling book. He was an egotist and a man of impulse. His impressions were for the time overpowering; but they were transient. His temper was often stronger than his passions. A gust of anger would make him quarrel with his oldest friends. Every emotion justified itself for the time, because it was his. He always did well, whether it pleased him for the moment to be angry, to be in love, to be cynical, or to be furiously indignant. The end, therefore, of his life exhibits a series of short impetuous fits of passionate endeavour, rather than devotion to a single overruling purpose; and all his writings are brief outbursts of eloquent feeling, where neither the separate fragments nor the works considered as a whole obey any law of logical development. And yet, in some ways, Hazlitt boasted, and boasted plausibly enough, of his constancy. He has the same ideas to the end of his life that he had at fourteen. He would, he remarks, be an excellent man on a jury. He would say little, but would starve the eleven other obstinate fellows out. Amongst politicians he was a faithful Abdiel, when all others had deserted the cause. He loved the books of his boyhood, the fields where he had walked, the gardens where he had drunk tea, and, to a rather provoking extent, the old quotations and old stories which he had used from his first days of authorship. The explanation of the apparent paradox gives the clue to Hazlitt's singular character.

What I have called Hazlitt's egotism is more euphemistically and perhaps more accurately described by Talfourd,* "an intense consciousness of his own individual being." The word egotism in our rough estimates of character is too easily confounded with selfishness. Hazlitt might have been the person who assured a friend that he took a deep interest in his own concerns, or rather in his own emotions. He was, one could say,

* In the excellent Essay prefixed to *Hazlitt's Literary Remains*.

decidedly unselfish, if by selfishness is meant a disposition to feather one's own nest without regard for other people's wants. Still less was he selfish in the sense of preferring solid bread and butter to the higher needs of mind and spirit. His sentiments are always generous, and if scorn is too familiar a mood it is scorn of the base and servile. But his peculiarity is that these generous feelings are always associated with some special case. He sees every abstract principle by the concrete instance. He hates insolence in the abstract, but his hatred flames into passion when it is insolence to Hazlitt. He resembles that good old lady who wrote on the margin of her *Complete Duty of Man* the name of that neighbour who most conspicuously sinned against the precept of the adjacent text. Tyranny with Hazlitt is named Pitt, party spite is Gifford, apostasy is Southey, and fidelity may perhaps be called Cobbett; though he finds names for the vices much more easily than for the virtues. And thus, if he cannot be condemned for selfishness, one must be charitable not to put down a good many of his offences to its sister jealousy. The personal and the public sentiments are so invariably blended in his mind that neither he nor anybody else could have analysed their composition. He was apt to be the more moody and irritable because his resentments clothe themselves spontaneously in the language of some nobler emotion. If his friends are cold, he bewails the fickleness of humanity; if they are successful it is not envy that prompts his irritation, but the rare correspondence between merit and reward. Such a man is more faithful to his dead than to his living friends. The dead cannot change; they always come back to his memory in their old colours; their names recall the old tender emotion placed above all change and chance. But who can tell that our dearest living friend may not come into awkward collision with us before he has left the room? It is as well to be on our guard! It is curious how the two feelings alternate in Hazlitt's mind in regard to the friends who are at once dead and living; how fondly he dwells upon the Coleridge of Wem and Nether Stowey where he first listened to the enchanter's voice, and with what bitterness, which is yet but soured affection, he turns upon the Coleridge who defended war-taxes in the *Friend*. He hacks and hews at Southey through several furious Essays and ends with a groan. "We met him unexpectedly the other day in St. Giles's," he says, "were sorry we had passed him without speaking to an old friend, turned and looked after him for some time as to a tale of other days—sighing, as we walked on, alas, poor Southey!" He fancies himself to be in the mood of Brutus murdering Cæsar. It is patriotism struggling with old associations of friendship; if there is any personal element in the hostility, no one is less conscious of it than the possessor. To the whole Lake school his attitude is always the same—justice done grudgingly in spite of anger, or satire tempered by remorse. No one could say nastier things of that very different egotist, Wordsworth; nor could any one, outside the sacred clique, pay him heartier compliments. Nobody, indeed, can dislike egotism like an egotist. "Wordsworth," says Hazlitt, "sees nothing but himself

and the universe; he hates all greatness and all pretensions to it but his own. His egotism is in this respect a madness, for he scorns even the admiration of himself, thinking it a presumption in any one to suppose that he has taste or sense enough to understand him. He hates all science and all art: he hates chemistry, he hates conchology, he hates Sir Isaac Newton, he hates logic, he hates metaphysics," and so on through a long list of hatreds, ending with the inimitable Napoleon, whom Wordsworth hates, it seems, "to get rid of the idea of anything greater, or thought to be greater than himself." Hazlitt might have made out a tolerable list of his own antipathies; though, to do him justice, of antipathies balanced by ardent enthusiasm, especially for the dead or the distant.

Hazlitt, indeed, was incapable of the superlative self-esteem here attributed to Wordsworth. His egotism is a curious variety of that Protean passion, compounded as skilfully as the melancholy of Jaques. It is not the fascinating and humorous egotism of Lamb, who disarms us beforehand by a smile at his own crotchets. Hazlitt is too serious to be playful. Nor is it like the amusing egotism of Boswell, combined with a vanity which evades our contempt, because it asks so frankly for sympathy. Hazlitt is too proud and too bitter. Neither is it the misanthropic egotism of Byron, which, through all its affectation, implies a certain aristocratic contempt of the world and its laws. Hazlitt has not the sweep and continuity of Byron's passion. His egotism—be it said without offence—is dashed with something of the feeling common amongst his dissenting friends. He feels the awkwardness which prevails amongst a clique branded by a certain social stigma, and despises himself for his awkwardness. He resents neglect and scorns to ask for patronage. His egotism is a touchy and wayward feeling which takes the mask of misanthropy. He is always meditating upon his own qualities, but not in the spirit of the conceited man who plumes himself upon his virtues, nor of the ascetic who broods over his vices. He prefers the apparently self-contradictory attitude (but human nature is illogical) of meditating with remorse upon his own virtues. What in others is complacency becomes with him, ostensibly at least, self-reproach. He affects—but it is hard to say where the affectation begins—to be annoyed by the contemplation of his own merits. He is angry with the world for preferring commonplace to genius, and rewarding stupidity by success; but in form at least, he mocks at his own folly for expecting better things. If he is vain at bottom, his vanity shows itself indirectly by depreciating his neighbours. He is too proud to dwell upon his own virtues, but he has been convinced by impartial observation that the world at large is in a conspiracy against merit. Thus he manages to transform his self-consciousness into the semblance of proud humility, and extracts a bitter and rather morbid pleasure from dwelling upon his disappointments and failures. Half-a-dozen of his best Essays give expression to this mood, which is rather bitter than querulous. He enlarges cordially on the "disadvantages of intellectual superiority." An author—Hazlitt, to wit—is not allowed to relax into dulness; if he is

brilliant he is not understood, and if he professes an interest in common things it is assumed that then he must be a fool. And yet in the midst of these grumbings he is forced to admit a touch of weakness, and tells us how it pleases him to hear a man ask in the Fives Court, "which is Mr. Hazlitt?" He, the most idiosyncratic of men and most proud of it at bottom, declares how "he hates his style to be known, as he hates all idiosyncrasy." At the next moment he purrs with complacency at the recollection of having been forced into an avowal of his authorship of an article in the *Edinburgh Review*. Most generally he eschews these naïve lapses into vanity. He dilates on the old text of the "shyness of scholars." The learned are out of place in competition with the world. They are not and ought not to fancy themselves fitted for the vulgar arena. They can never enjoy their old privileges. "Fool that it (learning) was, ever to forego its privileges and loosen the strong hold it had on opinion in bigotry and superstition!" The same tone of disgust pronounces itself more cynically in an Essay "on the pleasure of hating." Hatred is, he admits, a poisonous ingredient in all our passions, but it is that which gives reality to them. Patriotism means hatred of the French, and virtue is a hatred of other people's faults to atone for our own vices. All things turn to hatred. "We hate old friends, we hate old books, we hate old opinions, and at last we come to hate ourselves." Summing up all his disappointments, the broken friendships, and disappointed ambitions, and vanished illusions, he asks, in conclusion, whether he has not come to hate and despise himself? "Indeed, I do," he answers, "and chiefly for not having hated and despised the world enough."

This is an outbreak of temporary spleen. Nobody loved his old books and old opinions better. Hazlitt is speaking in the character of Timon, which indeed fits him rather too easily. But elsewhere the same strain of cynicism comes out in more natural and less extravagant form. Take, for example, the Essay on the "Conduct of Life." It is a piece of *bonâ fide* advice addressed to his boy at school, and gives in a sufficiently edifying form the commonplaces which elders are accustomed to address to their juniors. Honesty, independence, diligence, and temperance are commended in good set terms, though with an earnestness which, as is often the case with Hazlitt, imparts some reality to outworn formulæ. When, however, he comes to the question of marriage, the true man breaks out. Don't trust, he says, to fine sentiments: they will make no more impression on these delicate creatures than on a piece of marble. Love in women is vanity, interest, or fancy. Women care nothing about talents or virtue—about poets or philosophers or politicians. They judge by the eye. "No true woman ever regarded anything but her lover's person and address." The author has no chance; for he lives in a dream, he feels nothing spontaneously, his metaphysical refinements are all thrown away. "Look up, laugh loud, talk big, keep the colour in your cheek and the fire in your eye, adorn your person, maintain your health, your beauty, and your animal spirits;" for if you once lapse into poetry and philosophy "you will want an eye to shew

you, a hand to guide you, a bosom to love—and will stagger into your grave old before your time, unloved and unlovely." "A spider," he adds, the meanest creature that crawls or lives, has its mate or fellow, but a scholar has no mate or fellow." Mrs. Hazlitt, Miss Sarah Walker, and several other ladies thought Hazlitt surly and cared nothing for his treatise on human nature. Therefore (it is true Hazlittian logic) no woman cares for sentiment. The sex which despised him must be despicable. Equally characteristic is his profound belief that his failure in another line is owing to the malignity of the world at large. In one of his most characteristic Essays he asks whether genius is conscious of its powers. He writes what he declares to be a digression about his own experience, and we may believe as much as we please of his assertion that he does not quote himself as an example of genius. He has spoken, he declares, with freedom and power, and will not cease because he is abused for not being a Government tool. He wrote a charming character of Congreve's Millamant, but it was unnoticed because he was not a Government tool. Gifford would not relish his account of Dekker's Orlando Friscobaldo—because he was not a Government tool. He wrote admirable table-talks—for once, as they are nearly finished, he will venture to praise himself. He could swear (were they not his) that the thoughts in them were "founded as the rock, free as the air, in tone like an Italian picture." But, had the style been like polished steel, as firm and as bright, it would have availed him nothing, for he was not a Government tool. The world hated him, we see, for his merits. It is a bad world, he says; but don't think that it is my vanity which has taken offence, for I am remarkable for modesty, and therefore I know that my virtues are faults of which I ought to be ashamed. Is this pride or vanity, or humility or cynicism, or self-reproach for wasted talents, or an intimate blending of passions for which there is no precise name? Who can unravel the masks within masks of a cunning egotism?

To one virtue, however, that of political constancy, Hazlitt lays claim in the most emphatic terms. If he quarrels with all his friends—"most of the friends I have seen have turned out the bitterest enemies, or cold, uncomfortable acquaintance"—it is, of course, their fault. A thorough-going egotist must think himself the centre of gravity of the world, and all change of relations must mean that others have moved away from him. Politically, too, all who have given up his opinions are deserters, and generally from the worst of motives. He accuses Burke of turning against the revolution from—of all motives in the world!—jealousy of Rousseau; a theory still more absurd than Mr. Buckle's hypothesis of madness. Court favour supplies in most cases a simpler explanation of the general demoralization. Hazlitt could not give credit to men like Southey and Coleridge for sincere alarm at the French revolution. Such a sentiment would be too unreasonable, for he had not been alarmed himself. His constancy, indeed, would be admirable if it did not suggest doubts of his wisdom. A man, whose opinions at fifty are his opinions at fourteen, has opinions of very little value. If his intellect had developed properly, or if

he could have profited by experience, he will modify, though he need not retract, his early views. To claim to have learnt nothing from 1792 to 1830 is almost to write yourself down as hopelessly impenetrable. The explanation is, that what Hazlitt called his opinions were really his feelings. He could argue very ingeniously, as appears from his remarks on Coleridge and Malthus, but his logic was the slave, not the ruler, of his emotions. His politics were simply the expression, in a generalized form, of his intense feeling of personality. They are a projection upon the modern political feeling of that heroic spirit of individual self-respect which animated his Puritan forefathers. One question, and only one question, he frequently tells us, is of real importance. All the rest is mere verbiage. The single dogma worth attacking or defending, is the divine right of kings. Are men, in the old phrase, born, saddled and bridled, and other men ready booted and spurred, or are they not? That is the single shibboleth which tells true men from false. Others, he says, bowed their heads to the image of the beast. "I spat upon it, and buffeted it, and pointed at it, and drew aside the veil that then half concealed it." This passionate denial of the absolute right of men over their fellows is but vicarious pride, if you please to call it so, or a generous recognition of the dignity of human nature translated into political terms. Hazlitt's character did not change, however much his judgment of individuals might change; and therefore the principles which merely reflected his character remained rooted and unshaken. And yet his politics changed curiously enough in another sense. The abstract truth, in Hazlitt's mind, must always have a concrete symbol. He chose to regard Napoleon as the antithesis to the divine right of kings. That was the vital formula of Napoleon, his essence, and the true meaning of his policy. The one question in abstract politics was typified for Hazlitt by the contrast between Napoleon and the Holy Alliance. To prove that Napoleon could trample on human rights as roughly as any legitimate sovereign was for him mere waste of time. Napoleon's tyranny meant a fair war against the evil principle. Had Hazlitt lived in France, and come into collision with press laws, it is likely enough that his sentiments would have changed. But Napoleon was far enough off to serve as a mere poetical symbol; his memory had got itself entwined in those youthful associations on which Hazlitt always dwelt so fondly; and, moreover, to defend "Boney" was to quarrel with much of his countrymen, and even of his own party. What more was wanted to make him one of Hazlitt's superstitions? No more ardent devotee of the Napoleonic legend ever existed, and Hazlitt's last years were employed in writing a book which is a political pamphlet as much as a history. He worships the eldest Napoleon with the fervour of a corporal of the Old Guard, and denounces the great conspiracy of kings and nobles with the energy of Cobbett; but he had none of the special knowledge which alone could give permanent value to such a performance. He seems to have consulted only the French authorities; and it is refreshing for once to find an Englishman

telling the story of Waterloo entirely from the French side, and speaking, for example, of left and right as if he had been—as in imagination he was—by the side of Napoleon instead of Wellington. Even M. Victor Hugo can see more merit in the English army and its commander. A radical, who takes Napoleon for his polar-star, must change some of his theories, though he disguises the change from himself; but a change of a different kind came over Hazlitt as he grew older.

The enthusiasm of the Southneys and Wordsworths for the French revolution changed—whatever their motives—into enthusiasm for the established order. Hazlitt's enthusiasm remained, but became the enthusiasm of regret instead of hope. As one by one the former zealots dropped off he despised them as renegades, and clasped his old creed the more firmly to his bosom. But the change did not draw him nearer to the few who remained faithful. They perversely loved the wrong side of the right cause, or loved it for the wrong reason. He liked the Whigs no better than the Tories; the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly* were opposition coaches, making a great dust and spattering each other with mud, but travelling by the same road to the same end. A Whig, he said, was a trimmer, who dared neither to be a rogue nor an honest man, but was "a sort of whiffing, shuffling, cunning, silly, contemptible, unmeaning negation of the two." And the true, genuine, radical reformers? To them, as represented by the school of Bentham, Hazlitt entertained an aversion quite as hearty as his aversion for Whigs and Tories. If, he says, the Whigs are too finical to join heartily with the popular advocates, the Reformers are too sour. They hate literature, poetry, and romance; nothing gives them pleasure that does not give others pain; utilitarianism means prosaic, hard-hearted, narrow-minded dogmatism. Indeed, his pet essay on the principles of human nature was simply an assault on what he took to be their fundamental position. He fancied that the school of Bentham regarded man as a purely selfish and calculating animal; and his whole philosophy was an attempt to prove the natural disinterestedness of man, and to indicate for the imagination and the emotions their proper place beside the calculating faculty. Few were those who did not come under one or other clause of this sweeping denunciation. He assailed Shelley, who was neither Whig, Tory, nor Utilitarian, so cuttingly as to provoke a dispute with Leigh Hunt, and had some of his sharp criticisms for his friend Godwin. His general moral, indeed, is the old congenial one. The reformer is as unfit for this world as the scholar. He is the only wise man, but, as things go, wisdom is the worst of follies. The reformer, he says, is necessarily a marplot; he does not know what he would be at; if he did, he does not much care for it; and, moreover, he is "governed habitually by a spirit of contradiction, and is always wise beyond what is practicable." Upon this text Hazlitt dilates with immense spirit, satirizing the crotchety and impracticable race, and contrasting them with the disciplined phalanx of Toryism, brilliantly and bitterly enough to delight Gifford; and yet he is writing a preface to a volume of radical

Essays. He is consoling himself for being in a minority of one by proving that two virtuous men must always disagree. Hazlitt is no genuine democrat. He hates "both mobs," or, in other words, the great mass of the human race. He would sympathise with Coriolanus more easily than with the Tribunes. He laughs at the perfectibility of the species, and holds that "all things move, not in progress, but in a ceaseless round." The glorious dream is fled :

The radiance which was once so bright
Is now for ever taken from our sight ;

and his only consolation is to live over in memory the sanguine times of his youth, before Napoleon had fallen and the Holy Alliance restored the divine right of kings ; to cherish eternal regret for the hopes that have departed, and hatred and scorn equally enduring for those who blasted them. "Give me back," he exclaims, "one single evening at Boxhill, after a stroll in the deep empurpled woods, before Bonaparte was yet beaten, with 'wine of Attic taste,' when wit, beauty, friendship presided at the board." The personal blends with the political regret.

Hazlitt, the politician, was soured. He fed his morbid egotism by indignantly chewing the cud of disappointment, and scornfully rejecting comfort. He quarrelled with his wife and with most of his friends, even with the gentle Lamb, till Lamb regained his affections by the brief quarrel with Southey. Certainly, he might call himself, with some plausibility, "the king of good haters." But, after all, Hazlitt's cynicism is the souring of a generous nature ; and when we turn from the politician to the critic and the essayist, our admiration for his powers is less frequently jarred by annoyance at their wayward misuse. His egotism—for he is still an egotist—here takes a different shape. His criticism is not of the kind which is now most popular. He lived before the days of philosophers who talk about the organism and its environment, and of the connoisseurs who boast of an eclectic taste for all the delicate essences of art. He never thought of showing that a great writer was only the product of his time, race and climate ; and he had not learnt to use such terms of art as "supreme," "gracious," "tender," "bitter," and "subtle," in which a good deal of criticism now consists. Lamb, says Hazlitt, tried old authors "on his palate as epicures taste olives ;" and the delicacy of discrimination which makes the process enjoyable is perhaps the highest qualification of a good critic. Hazlitt's point of view was rather different, and he seldom shows that exquisite appreciation of purely literary charm which we find in two or three first-rate writers of to-day, and which is affected by some scores of imitators. Nobody, indeed, loved some authors more heartily ; indeed, his love is so hearty that he cannot preserve the true critical attitude. Instead of trying them on his palate, he swallows them greedily. His judgment of an author seems to depend upon two circumstances. He is determined in great measure by his private associations, and in part by his sympathy for the character of the writer.

His interest in this last sense is, one may say, rather psychological than purely critical. He thinks of an author, not as the exponent of a particular vein of thought or emotion, nor as an artistic performer on the instrument of language, but as a human being to be loved or hated, or both, like Napoleon or Gifford or Southey.

Hazlitt's favourite authors were, for the most part, the friends of his youth. He had pored over their pages till he knew them by heart; their phrases were as familiar to his lips as texts of Scripture to preachers who know but one book; the places where he had read them became sacred to him, and a glory of his early enthusiasm was still reflected from the old pages. Rousseau was his beloved above all writers. They had a natural affinity. What Hazlitt says of Rousseau may be partly applied to himself. Of Hazlitt it might be said almost as truly as of Rousseau, that "he had the most intense consciousness of his own existence. No object that had once made an impression upon him was ever after effaced." In Rousseau's *Confessions* and *Nouvelle Héloïse*, Hazlitt saw the reflections of his own passions. He spent, he declares, two whole years in reading these two books; and they were the happiest years of his life. He marks with a white stone the days on which he read particular passages. It was on April 10, 1798—as he tells us some twenty years later—that he sat down to a volume of the *New Héloïse*, at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken. He tells us which passage he read and what was the view before his bodily eyes. His first reading of *Paul and Virginia* is associated with an inn at Bridgewater; and at another old-fashioned inn he tells how the rustic fare and the quaint architecture gave additional piquancy to Congreve's wit. He remembers, too, the spot at which he first read Mrs. Inchbald's *Simple Story*; how he walked out to escape from one of the tenderest parts, in order to return again with double relish. "An old crazy hand-organ," he adds, "was playing Robin Adair, a summer shower dropped manna on my head, and slaked my feverish thirst of happiness." He looks back to his first familiarity with his favourites as an old man may think of his honeymoon. The memories of his own feelings, of his author's poetry, and of the surrounding scenery, are inextricably fused together. The sight of an old volume, he says, sometimes shakes twenty years off his life; he sees his old friends alive again, the place where he read the book, the day when he got it, the feeling of the air, the fields, the sky. To these old favourites he remained faithful, except that he seems to have tired of the glitter of Junius. Burke's politics gave him some severe twinges. He says, in one place, that he always tests the sense and candour of a liberal by his willingness to admit the greatness of Burke. He adds, as a note to the Essay in which this occurs, that it was written in a "fit of extravagant candour," when he thought that he could be more than just to an enemy without betraying a cause. He oscillates between these views as his humour changes. He is absurdly unjust to Burke the politician; but he does not waver in his just recognition of the marvellous

power of the greatest—I should almost say the only great—political writer in the language. The first time he read a passage from Burke, he said this is true eloquence. Johnson immediately became stilted, and Junius “shrank up into little antithetic points and well-tuned sentences. But Burke’s style was forked and playful like the lightning, crested like the serpent.” He is never weary of Burke, as he elsewhere says; and, in fact, he is man enough to recognize genuine power when he meets it. To another great master he yields with a reluctance which is an involuntary compliment. The one author whom he admitted into his Pantheon after his youthful enthusiasm had cooled was unluckily the most consistent of Tories. Who is there, he asks, that admires the author of *Waverley* more than I do? Who is there that despises Sir Walter Scott more? The Scotch novels, as they were then called, fairly overpowered him. The imaginative force, the geniality and the wealth of picturesque incident of the greatest of novelists, disarmed his antipathy. It is curious to see how he struggles with himself. He blesses and curses in a breath. He applies to Scott Pope’s description of Bacon, “the greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind,” and asks—

Who would not laugh if such a man there be?

Who would not weep if “*Waverley*” were he?

He crowns a torrent of abuse by declaring that Scott has encouraged the lowest panders of a venal press, “deluging and nauseating the public mind with the offal and garbage of Billingsgate abuse and vulgar slang;” and presently he calls Scott—by way, it is true, of lowering Byron—“one of the greatest teachers of morality that ever lived.” He invents a theory, to which he returns more than once, to justify the contrast. Scott, he says, is much such a writer as the Duke of Wellington (the hated antithesis of Napoleon, whose “foolish face” he specially detests) is a general. The one gets 100,000 men together, and “leaves it to them to fight out the battle, for if he meddled with it he might spoil sport; the other gets an innumerable quantity of facts together, and lets them tell their story as they may. The facts are stubborn in the last instance as the men are in the first, and in neither case is the broth spoiled by the cook.” They show modesty and self-knowledge, but “little boldness or inventiveness of genius.” On the strength of this doctrine he even compares Scott disadvantageously with Godwin and Mrs. Inchbald, who had, it seems, more invention though fewer facts. Hazlitt was not bound to understand strategy, and devoutly held that Wellington’s armies succeeded because their general only looked on. But he should have understood his own trade a little better. Putting aside this grotesque theory, he feels Scott’s greatness truly, and admits it generously. He enjoys the broth, to use his own phrase, though he is determined to believe that it somehow made itself.

Lamb said that Hazlitt was a greater authority when he praised than when he abused, a doctrine which may be true of others than Hazlitt. The true distinction is rather that Hazlitt, though always unsafe as a

judge, is admirable as an advocate in his own cause, and poor when merely speaking from his brief. Of Mrs. Inchbald I must say what Hazlitt shocked his audience by saying of Hannah More; that she has written a good deal which I have not read, and I therefore cannot deny that her novels might have been written by Venus; but I cannot admit that Wycherley's brutal Plain-dealer is as good as ten volumes of sermons. "It is curious to see," says Hazlitt, rather naively, "how the same subject is treated by two such different authors as Shakspeare and Wycherley." Macaulay's remark about the same coincidence is more to the point. "Wycherley borrows Viola," says that vigorous moralist, "and Viola forthwith becomes a pander of the basest sort." That is literally true. Indeed, Hazlitt's love for the dramatists of the Restoration is something of a puzzle, except so far as it is explained by early associations. Even then it is hard to explain the sympathy which Hazlitt, the lover of Rousseau and sentiment, feels for Congreve, whose speciality it is that a touch of sentiment is as rare in his painfully-witty dialogues as a drop of water in the desert. Perhaps a contempt for the prejudices of respectable people gave zest to Hazlitt's enjoyment of a literature representative of a social atmosphere most propitious to his best feelings. And yet, though I cannot take Hazlitt's judgment, I would frankly admit that Hazlitt's enthusiasm brings out Congreve's real merits with a force of which a calmer judge would be incapable. His warm praises of *The Beggar's Opera*, his assault upon Sidney's *Arcadia*, his sarcasms against that most detestable of poetasters, Tom Moore, are all excellent in their way, whether we do or do not agree with his final result. Whenever Hazlitt writes from his own mind, in short, he writes what is well worth reading. Hazlitt learnt something in his later years from Lamb. He prefers, he says, those papers of Elia in which there was the least infusion of antiquated language; and, in fact, Lamb never inoculated him with his taste for the old English literature. Hazlitt gave a series of lectures upon the Elizabethan dramatists, and carelessly remarks some time afterwards that he has only read about a quarter of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, and intends to read the rest when he has a chance. It is plain, indeed, that the lectures, though written at times with great spirit, are the work of a man who has got them up for the occasion. And in his more ambitious and successful essays upon Shakspeare the same want of reading appears in another way. He is more familiar with Shakspeare's text than many better scholars. His familiarity is proved by a habit of quotation of which it has been disputed whether it is a merit or a defect. What phrenologists would call the adhesiveness of Hazlitt's mind, its extreme retentiveness for any impression which has once been received, tempts him to a constant repetition of familiar phrases and illustrations. He has, too, a trick of working in patches of his old Essays, which he expressly defends on the ground that a book which has not reached a second edition may be considered by its author as manuscript. This self-plagiarism sometimes worries us like a man whose conversation

runs in ruts. But his quotations, where used in moderation, often give, to my taste at least, a pleasant richness to his style. Shakspeare, in particular, seems to be a storehouse into which he can always dip for an appropriate turn. But his love of Shakspeare is of a characteristic kind. He has not counted syllables nor weighed various readings. He does not throw a new light upon delicate indications of thought and sentiment, nor philosophize after the manner of Coleridge and the Germans, nor regard Shakspeare as the representative of his age according to the sweeping method of M. Taine. Neither does he seem to love Shakspeare himself as he loves Rousseau or Richardson. He speaks contemptuously of the Sonnets and Poems, and, though I respect his sincerity, I think that such a verdict necessarily indicates indifference to the most Shaksperian parts of Shakspeare. The calm assertion that the qualities of the Poems are the reverse of the qualities of the Plays is unworthy of Hazlitt's general acuteness. That which really attracts Hazlitt is sufficiently indicated by the title of his book; he describes the characters of Shakspeare's plays. It is Iago, and Timon, and Coriolanus, and Antony, and Cleopatra, who really interest him. He loves and hates them as if they were his own contemporaries; he gives the main outlines of their character with a spirited touch. And yet one somehow feels that Hazlitt is not at his best in Shaksperian criticism; his eulogies savour of commonplace, and are wanting in spontaneity. There is not that warm glow of personal feeling which gives light and warmth to his style whenever he touches upon his early favourites. Perhaps he is a little daunted by the greatness of his task, and, perhaps, there is something in the Shaksperian width of sympathy and in the Shaksperian humour which lies beyond Hazlitt's sphere. His criticism of Hamlet is feeble; he does not do justice to Mercutio or to Jaques; but he sympathises more heartily with the tremendous passion of Lear and Othello, and finds something congenial to his taste in Coriolanus and Timon of Athens. It is characteristic, too, that he evidently understands Shakspeare better on the stage than in the closet. When he can associate Iago and Shylock with the visible presence of Kean, he can introduce that personal element which is so necessary to his best writing.

The best, indeed, of Hazlitt's criticisms—if the word may be so far extended—are his criticisms of living men. The criticism of contemporary portraits called the *Spirit of the Age* is one of the first of those series which have now become popular, as it is certainly one of the very best. The descriptions of Bentham, and Godwin, and Coleridge, and Horne Tooke, are masterpieces in their way. They are, of course, unfair; but that is part of their charm. One would no more take for granted Hazlitt's valuation of Wordsworth than Timon's judgment of Alcibiades. Hazlitt sees through coloured glasses, but his vision is not the less penetrating. The vulgar satirist is such a one as Hazlitt somewhere mentioned who called Wordsworth a dunce. Hazlitt was quite incapable of such a solecism. He knew, nobody better, that a telling caricature must be a good likeness.

If he darkens the shades, and here and there exaggerates an ungainly feature, we still know that the shade exists and that the feature is not symmetrical. De Quincey reports the saying of some admiring friend of Hazlitt, who confessed to a shudder whenever Hazlitt used his habitual gesture of placing his hand within his waistcoat. The hand might emerge armed with a dagger. Whenever, said the same friend (Heaven preserve us from our friends !), Hazlitt had been distracted for a moment from the general conversation, he looked round with a mingled air of suspicion and defiance as though some objectionable phrase might have evaded his censure in the interval. The traits recur to us when we read Hazlitt's descriptions of the men he had known. We seem to see the dark sardonic man, watching the faces and gestures of his friends, ready to take sudden offence at any affront to his cherished prejudices, and yet hampered by a kind of nervous timidity which makes him unpleasantly conscious of his own awkwardness. He remains silent, till somebody unwittingly contradicts his unspoken thoughts—the most irritating kind of contradiction to some people !—and perhaps heaps indiscriminating praise on an old friend—a term nearly synonymous with an old enemy. Then the dagger suddenly flashes out, and Hazlitt strikes two or three rapid blows, aimed with unerring accuracy at the weak points of the armour which he knows so well. And then, as he strikes, a relenting comes over him ; he remembers old days with a sudden gust of fondness, and puts a touch of scorn for his allies or himself. Coleridge may deserve a blow, but the applause of Coleridge's enemies awakes his self-reproach. His invective turns into panegyric, and he warms for a time into hearty admiration, which proves that his irritation arises from an excess, not from a defect, of sensibility ; till finding that he has gone a little too far, he lets his praise slide into equivocal description, and with some parting epigram, he relapses into silence. The portraits thus drawn are never wanting in piquancy nor in fidelity. Brooding over his injuries and his desertions, Hazlitt has pondered almost with the eagerness of a lover upon the qualities of his intimates. Suspicion, unjust it may be, has given keenness to his investigation. He has interpreted in his own fashion every mood and gesture. He has watched his friends as a courtier watches a royal favourite. He has stored in his memory, as we fancy, the good retorts which his shyness or unreadiness smothered at the propitious moment, and brings them out in the shape of a personal description. When such a man sits at our tables, silent and apparently self-absorbed, and yet shrewd and sensitive, we may well be afraid of the dagger, though it may not be drawn till after our death, and may write memoirs instead of piercing flesh. And yet Hazlitt is no mean assassin of reputations ; nor is his enmity as a rule more than the seamy side of friendship. Gifford, indeed, and Croker, “the talking potato,” are treated as outside the pale of human rights.

Excellent as Hazlitt can be as a dispenser of praise and blame, he seems to me to be at his best in a different capacity. The first of his performances which attracted much attention was the *Round Table*, designed

by Leigh Hunt (who contributed a few papers), on the old *Spectator* model. In the Essays afterwards collected in the volumes called *Table Talk* and the *Plain Speaker*, he is still better, because more certain of his position. It would, indeed, be difficult to name any writer from the days of Addison to those of Lamb, who has surpassed Hazlitt's best performances of this kind. Addison is too unlike to justify a comparison; and, to say the truth, though he has rather more in common with Lamb, the contrast is much more obvious than the resemblance. Each wants the other's most characteristic vein; Hazlitt has hardly a touch of humour, and Lamb is incapable of Hazlitt's caustic scorn for the world and himself. They have indeed in common, besides certain superficial tastes, a love of pathetic brooding over the past. But the sentiment exerted is radically different. Lamb forgets himself when brooding over an old author or summoning up the "old familiar faces." His melancholy and his mirth cast delightful cross-lights upon the topics of which he converses, and we know, when we pause to reflect, that it is not the intrinsic merit of the objects, but Lamb's own character, which has caused our pleasure. They would be dull, that is, in other hands; but the feeling is embodied in the object described, and not made itself the source of our interest. With Hazlitt, it is the opposite. He is never more present than when he is dwelling upon the past. Even in criticising a book or a man his favourite mode is to tell us how he came to love or to hate him; and in the non-critical Essays he is always appealing to us, directly or indirectly, for sympathy with his own personal emotions. He tells us how passionately he is yearning for the days of his youth; he is trying to escape from his pressing annoyances; wrapping himself in sacred associations against the fret and worry of surrounding cares; repaying himself for the scorn of women or Quarterly Reviewers by retreating into some imaginary hermitage; and it is the delight of dreaming upon which he dwells more than upon the beauty of the visions revealed to his inward eye. The force with which this sentiment is presented gives a curious fascination to some of his Essays. Take, for example, the Essay in *Table Talk*, "On Living to Oneself,"—an Essay written, as he is careful to tell us, on a mild January day in the country, whilst the fire is blazing on the hearth and a partridge getting ready for his supper. There he expatiates in happy isolation on the enjoyments of living as "a silent spectator of the mighty scheme of things;" as being in the world, and not of it; watching the clouds and the stars, poring over a book or gazing at a picture, without a thought of becoming an author or an artist. He has drifted into a quiet little backwater, and congratulates himself in all sincerity on his escape from the turbulent stream outside. He drinks in the delight of rest at every pore; reduces himself for the time to the state of a polyp drifting on the warm ocean stream; and becomes a voluptuous hermit. He calls up the old days when he acted up to his principles, and found pleasure enough in endless meditation and quiet observation of nature. He preaches most edifyingly on the disappointments, the excitements, the rough impacts of

hard facts upon sensitive natures, which haunt the world outside, and declares, in all sincerity, "This sort of dreaming existence is the best. He who quits it to go in search of realities generally barter repose for repeated disappointments and vain regrets." He is sincere, and therefore eloquent; and we need not, unless we please, add the remark that he enjoys rest because it is a relief from toil; and that he will curse the country as heartily as any man if doomed to perpetual exile from town. This meditation on the phenomena of his own sensations leads him often into interesting reflections of a psychological kind. He analyses his own feelings with constant eagerness, as he analyses the character of his enemies. A good specimen is the Essay "On Antiquity," in the *Plain Speaker*, which begins with some striking remarks on the apparently arbitrary mode in which some objects and periods seem older to us than others, in defiance of chronology. The monuments of the Middle Ages seem more antique than the Greek statues and temples with their immortal youth. "It is not the full-grown, articulated, thoroughly accomplished periods of the world that we regard with the pity or reverence due to age so much as those imperfect, unformed, uncertain periods which seem to totter on the verge of non-existence, to shrink from the grasp of our feeble imagination, as they crawl out of, or retire into the womb of time, of which our utmost assurance is to doubt whether they ever were or not." And then, as usual, he passes to his own experience, and meditates on the changed aspect of the world in youth and maturer life. The petty, personal emotions pass away, whilst the grand and ideal "remains with us unimpaired in its lofty abstraction from age to age." Therefore, though the inference is not quite clear, he can never forget the first time he saw Mrs. Siddons act, or the appearance of Burke's "Letter to a Noble Lord." And then, in a passage worthy of Sir Thomas Browne, he describes the change produced as our minds are stereotyped, as our most striking thoughts become truisms, and we lose the faculty of admiration. In our youth "art woos us; science tempts us with her intricate labyrinths; each step presents unlooked-for vistas, and closes upon us our backward path. Our onward road is strange, obscure, and infinite. We are bewildered in a shadow, lost in a dream. Our perceptions have the brightness and indistinctness of a trance. Our continuity of consciousness is broken, crumbles, and falls to pieces. We go on learning and forgetting every hour. Our feelings are chaotic, confused, strange to each other and ourselves." But in time we learn by rote the lessons which we had to spell out in our youth. "A very short period (from 15 to 25 or 30) includes the whole map and table of contents of human life. From that time we may be said to live our lives over again, repeat ourselves—the same thoughts return at stated intervals, like the tunes of a barrel-organ; and the volume of the universe is no more than a form of words, a book of reference."

From such musings Hazlitt can turn to describe any fresh impression which has interested him, in spite of his occasional weariness, with a

freshness and vivacity which proves that his eye had not grown dim, nor his temperament incapable of enjoyment. He fell in love with Miss Sarah Wilson at the tolerably ripe age of 49; and his desire to live in the past is not to be taken more seriously than his contempt for his literary reputation. It lasts only till some vivid sensation occurs in the present. In congenial company he could take a lively share in conversation, as is proved not only by external evidence but by his very amusing book of conversations with Northcote—an old cynic out of whom it does not seem that anybody else could strike many sparks,—or from the *Essay*, partly historical, it is to be supposed, in which he records his celebrated discussion with Lamb on persons whom one would wish to have seen. But perhaps some of his most characteristic performances in this line are those in which he anticipates the modern taste for muscularity. His wayward disposition to depreciate ostensibly his own department of action, leads him to write upon the “disadvantages of intellectual superiority,” and to maintain the thesis that the glory of the Indian jugglers is more desirable than that of a statesman. And perhaps the same sentiment, mingled with sheer artistic love of the physically beautiful, prompts his eloquence upon the game of Fives—in which he praises the great player Cavanagh as warmly and describes his last moments as pathetically as if he were talking of Rousseau—and still more his immortal *Essay* on the fight between the Gasman and Bill Neate. Prize-fighting is fortunately fallen into hopeless decay, and we are pretty well ashamed of the last flicker of enthusiasm created by Sayers and Heenan. We may therefore enjoy without remorse the prose-poem in which Hazlitt kindles with genuine enthusiasm to describe the fearful glories of the great battle. Even to one who hates the most brutalising of amusements, the spirit of the writer is irrepressibly contagious. We condemn, but we applaud; we are half disposed for the moment to talk the old twaddle about British pluck; and when Hazlitt’s companion on his way home pulls out of his pocket a volume of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, admit for a moment that “love after the Fancy is,” as the historian assures us, “compatible with a cultivation of sentiment.” If Hazlitt had thrown as much into his description of the Battle of Waterloo, and had taken the English side, he would have been a popular writer. But even Hazlitt cannot quite embalm the memories of Cribb, Belcher, and Gully.

It is time, however, to stop. More might be said by a qualified writer of Hazlitt’s merits as a judge of pictures or of the stage. The same literary qualities mark all his writings. De Quincey, of course, condemns Hazlitt, as he does Lamb, for a want of “continuity.” “A man,” he says, “whose thoughts are abrupt, insulated, capricious, and non-sequential.” But then De Quincey will hardly allow that any man is eloquent except Jeremy Taylor, Sir Thomas Browne, and Thomas De Quincey. Hazlitt certainly does not belong to their school; nor, on the other hand, has he the plain homespun force of Swift and Cobbett. And yet readers who do not insist upon measuring all prose by the same standard, will

probably agree that if Hazlitt is not a great rhetorician ; if he aims at no gorgeous effects of complex harmony, he has yet an eloquence of his own. It is indeed an eloquence which does not imply quick sympathy with many moods of feeling, or an intellectual vision at once penetrating and comprehensive. It is the eloquence characteristic of a proud and sensitive nature, which expresses a very keen if narrow range of feeling, and implies a powerful grasp of one, but only one side of the truth. Hazlitt harps a good deal upon one string ; but that string vibrates forcibly. His best passages are generally an accumulation of short, pithy sentences, shaped in strong feeling, and coloured by picturesque association ; but repeating, rather than corroborating, each other. Each blow goes home, but falls on the same place. He varies the phrase more than the thought ; and sometimes he becomes obscure, because he is so absorbed in his own feelings that he forgets the very existence of strangers who require explanation. Read through Hazlitt, and this monotony becomes a little tiresome ; but dip into him at intervals, and you will often be astonished that so vigorous a writer has not left some more enduring monument of his remarkable powers.

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THEN, BEFORE SHE COULD PREVENT HIM, HE FELL UPON HIS KNEES.

Miss Angel.

CHAPTER XIX.
IN GOLDEN SQUARE.

WHAT is a mood? Whence does it come? Why does it overwhelm us with its strange stupidities? Here we sit quietly in our chairs, and what adventures are ours. What comings and goings. What momentary emotion and curious changes and conflicts; armies of thought sweep past, experience, memory, hope, are all ranged in battle array; sometimes the two fight from daybreak until sunset and on into the night, nor is it perhaps till the morning that we know which army has retreated and to which the field belongs. For a time

some such battle was raging in Angelica's heart as she sat quite quiet upon the couch; then came silence and the deadness of humiliation. Some sudden hatred and indignation had come over Miss Angel, like a dry east wind parching her very soul. She had not deserved this, she said; she had been sincere; she had not sought her own advantage in all this; and it was hard to be humiliated.

To Angelica this strange distorted mood came as a punishment for other things, for the gentle vanities and infidelities which had brought her to this pass, which had led her on to overrate her own worth and judgment, and that perhaps of the persons whom she honoured.

It is Goethe who says that those who will not forgive themselves for small faults are persons who overrate their own importance. Angelica of late had had many excuses for overrating herself, and perhaps for this very reason suffered more acutely than she might have done at another time from the mistake she had made.

Young, ardent, reckless ; how was she to realise to herself the calm imperturbability of a nature which was not a passionate one or quickly responsive to things that were not tangible, and to which it was unaccustomed.

The determination to which Mr. Reynolds came was one which in the end, perhaps, was best for all, for Angelica herself and for others, but the wisdom of his judgment could only be measured by time. Perhaps it was some dim unacknowledged consciousness of the truth of his own want of earnestness which made him mistrust his sentiment for Miss Angel, its strength and power of endurance.

He walked away moderately satisfied with the part he had played ; Angel sat quite still, as I have said, looking into the gathering dusk, watching the lights fade ; they changed from blue twilight into grey and dimmest shadow ; chill, cold, silent, the spring evening gathered round her, and her white face and figure faded into its darkness.

Fate is kind sometimes with unexpected blessings, that seem all the brighter when they come in hours of twilight. Open a door into a room full of sorrowful shames and regrets. Flash the light of a candle upon all these vapours and dismal consternations. . . .

There is a sound of voices on the stairs ; there have been exclamations and thumpings and summonings ; some one is calling out her name eagerly, and the noise comes nearer and the light starts into the room, and somehow Angel, out of her twilight shame, suddenly finds herself in light, in love, enfolded in two trembling arms that hold her tight close to a shabby old beating heart. She is blessed almost before she knows who it is that has come ; she feels she is safe, scarce knowing how security has come to her ; safe upon her father's heart with the benediction of his tender faith upon her ; she knows all this almost before she has realised that it is he. She had not even heard the foot-steps travelling upstairs, so engrossed had she been by her dreary present. That present is over, changed in the twinkling of an eye. She gives a little happy cry, tears fill her eyes ; a sudden flood of ease flows to her heart, the heavy load seems uplifted as she clasps and clings to the old man, sobbing and at peace once more.

In after years that moment came back to her sometimes, and that meeting, the thought of her dim despairing loneliness, of the father's love outside the closed door. That faithful blessing (never absent indeed in its tender infallibility), had been coming nearer and nearer to its expression at the time when she needed its comfort.

It may be our blessing as well as our punishment that the *now* is not all with us as we hold it, nor the moment all over that is past. It is never quite too late to remember, never quite too late to love ; although the heart no longer throbs that we might have warmed, the arms are laid low that would have opened to us. But who shall say that time and place are to be a limit to the intangible spirit of love and reconciliation, and that new-found trust and long-delayed gratitude

may not mean more than we imagine in our lonely and silenced regret?

John Joseph was not alone, the porters were carrying up his trunk, with the great cords and padlocks. It contained a cheese among other treasures, and a goat-skin waistcoat, a present from his sister-in-law, and some linen for Angelica's own wear, and a peasant's hat and bodice from Coire, that Miss Angel had wished for.

Behind the hair trunk and holding by Antonio's hand came a little person, of some ten years' experience, climbing the stairs, with weary little feet, looking about with dark observant eyes, set in a shy ingenuous round face.

This was a little orphan cousin of Angelica's, Rosa, from Uncle Michele's farm, who had been despatched to keep house with her grand relations in London.

Old John had a liking for the little creature, who put him in mind of his own Angelica at her age, and he had brought her off without much pressing; he only stipulated that Michele should pay her travelling expenses as far as Lyons. "Couldn't we walk, Uncle John?" said little Rosa, anxiously; but Uncle John told her she should come in a coach with horses and postilions. What would Angelica say if they were to arrive all in rags and covered with dust? They might have come in rags, in sackcloth and ashes. Angelica had no words wherewith to bid them welcome; they were come home, that was enough. How had Antonio known they were arriving. What fortunate chance had sent him to meet them? The fortunate chance was that Antonio, being anxious about Miss Angel's woebegone looks an hour before, had walked back by the winding street at the square corner (that street which led so often to her house), and he had been standing outside at the windows, when old Kauffmann, shaken by his long journey, agitated, suspicious, fearing murder, and I know not what dangers, drove up in a hired coach. The first person the old man saw was Antonio, with folded arms, standing upon the pavement. He could scarcely believe in his good fortune. Was *this* the house, *this* Angelica's palace? The tall windows opened upon iron rails, carved and bent into shape as iron railings used to be in those days. Her door was also ornamented with delicate tracery, and on either side a narrow window let the light into the flagged hall, where a black-and-white pavement had been laid down by some former inhabitant. The place is little changed. Only yesterday we crossed the quaint little square, with its bare trees. The drifting clouds shone with city lights and gleams. The old houses stand in rows; they are turned to quaint uses—schools of arms, societies, little day-schools for children, foreign *table-d'hôtes*, a "supreme council" rules in a ground-floor parlour. Italian *courriers* congregate in the corner house, by which Zucchi used to pass on his way to the flagged hall. There are old shops for china and wooden carving in the adjoining streets. In one of the houses, M. R. tells me of a lawyer's office, where a painting by Miss

Kauffmann still graces the panel of the chimney. Perhaps that may have been the house where Zucchi lodged, and the painting may have been her gift to the faithful friend. The faithful friend was made happy to-night by the sight of the happiness of the people he was interested in. They had a little impromptu feast in the studio. The lamp was lighted, the table was spread, old Kauffman produced his cheese, and would have had Angelica's servants join them at supper, if she had not laughed the proposal off. Lord Henry happened to call in late, on his way to some card-party in Berkeley Square. He stared at the homely gathering, at the old man, at the little girl, half asleep, swinging her weary legs, with her head against Antonio's shoulder.

He tried to enter into his usual sentimental vein of talk with the mistress of the house, but she was naturally absorbed, and had no scruples in letting him see that he was in the way. He went off annoyed by his reception.

"That one there appears to have something wrong in the head," said old John Joseph, as Lord Henry walked away. "I spoke to him three times and he did not answer, but examined me as if I were an ox. These English people seem stupid and dull of comprehension."

"They are clever enough," said Antonio with a sneer, "and insolent enough at times to require a lesson." His vexation woke up little sleepy Rosa. The child raised her head, and looked round the room with blinking eyes.

"You will love some of them, father, when you know them better—don't believe cross old Antonio," said Angelica, "nor let us think of anybody but ourselves to-night." She rose from the table, and came round to where Antonio was sitting.

"Look at this child, she is half asleep," said Antonio, softening, as he usually did at Miss Angel's approach.

"Give her to me, Antonio," said Angel. "Come, Rosa, I will put you into your little bed," and then she opened her arms and little Rosa nestled into them with languid childish trust. The two men got up from the table, and followed Miss Angel into the adjoining room where Marienna had made up the little bed in a corner. Old Kauffmann began uncording Rosa's box, Angel sat down on the bedside smiling, with a happy grateful heart. Mr. Reynolds was far from her mind as little Rosa slept with her head hanging warm against her shoulder. The little thing woke up when Miss Angel undressed her, but she was soon dreaming again, unconscious of the strange new world into which she had come from her green home in the valley.

That was tranquil happiness; and all the next days were happy, and seemed as if they were old days come back. Antonio spent most of them in Golden Square; he was going away soon, he said, and returning to his work near Windsor. He had many messages for Angelica from his friends there, from Dr. Starr and his seven daughters.

"They say your room is always ready; you are never to go anywhere

else; it is a most agreeable house to live in. The seven young ladies are charming," said Antonio smiling.

"I cannot spare her yet," said John Joseph one day when Miss Angel had left the room. "But I am too tender a father to oppose her good prospects, and I shall know how to resign myself to a new separation when my child is summoned to the sovereign Court. Then she shall stay with your friends. I feel sometimes, Antonio, as though I were a foolish old man, and out of place in this brilliant circle. That lord came again this morning with the Lady Ambassadors. Their manner was extraordinary, but I would not for worlds that Angelica should know it. They are her patrons, they must be humoured by us."

One day Angelica found her father looking very much delighted. Antonio was also in the room, but *he* seemed annoyed.

"A friend had been there," said old Joseph, triumphant; "one whose friendship might be worth much to them all—one who——"

"It is that man from Venice," said Antonio. "I do not see how any of us can profit by his coming."

"Count de Horn? I shall be very glad to see him," said Miss Angel, laughing, and sitting down at her easel. "Was he nice, father? Was he glad to see us established in our splendour?"

"He is coming again," said Zucchi. "You will be able to ask him any questions you choose. Your father made him as welcome as if he had been a son of the house."

"And does not my father make others welcome, too?" said Angelica, looking round reproachfully.

Antonio shrugged his shoulders. "John Joseph knows well enough who is useful to him," he said.

When Count de Horn called again, as ill-luck would have it, Antonio was again there, and more than usually sarcastic. Angelica looked at him and shook her head to try and stop his rudeness to her guest, whom she was really glad to see. Antonio marched off in a rage.

M. de Horn seemed to notice nothing, but went on praising picture after picture. He even suggested one, of which the subject was to be a Cupid, with the motto "*Garde à vous*." Angelica actually executed this.

"We hope the Count will purchase the study," said old Kauffmann.

Antonio afterwards said he should not be surprised if he did; it was a most vulgar and commonplace composition.

Angelica nearly stamped with vexation. "Nothing pleases you that I do."

"Many things please me that you do, but you want me to compliment your vanity from morning to night," said Zucchi, trembling with vexation, upsetting a table in his wrath, and making himself generally odious.

Miss Angel's vanity was of a less excusable nature than good old John Joseph's reflected self-laudations. He became very pious about this time, and used to frequent the little Catholic chapel near Manchester Square, and return thanks to heaven for Angelica's success—for her patrons those

lords, this valuable Count their friend—for her talents, for his own repose and happiness. He used to come back rather cross, and scold little Rosa, or the man-servant, or Angel if she came to meet him, or Antonio if he began to sermonise.

Antonio bore the old man's vexatious moods with admirable temper. He was charming to any one young and helpless, or to old and dependent people. To successful people, however, to his equals and superiors, Antonio was, it must be confessed, perfectly odious at times.

CHAPTER XX.

THOSE WHO ARE ABLE TO RULE IN THE CITY.

DE HORN was a mystery to other people besides Antonio. He was never entirely at his ease. He would stand, or sit, or talk, apparently without effort, but nothing seemed spontaneous. He never appeared quite to belong to the society in which he was, or even to care to do so. He used to have strange fits of abstraction, during which he seemed to lose the thread of what was going on. One day, instead of walking upstairs into Angelica's studio, he wandered down into the kitchens below, to the utter amazement of the man and the cook. On another occasion he clambered up to the hanging board of his own coach. He was very kind but capricious to his servants and dependants. Many tales were told of his valour and military skill. He had commanded a regiment in the French army. People said he was now engaged upon some secret diplomatic mission. He had come from Venice by way of Vienna and Paris, and was now established in rooms in St. James's. He did not entertain, but his splendid equipage and liveries gave him notoriety, and his good looks and elaborate courtesy made him popular, especially with women; men were a little shy of him. He had fought a duel or two; he played cards as everybody else did, but he never drank any wine. His riding was unrivalled, and it was really a fine sight to see him mounted on one of Lord W.'s spirited chargers, and galloping round and round the stable-yard. His dancing was also said to be unequalled. He had already engaged Miss Angel for a couple of sets at Lady W.'s great ball, to which every one was looking forward.

De Horn was a tall and distinguished-looking man, with a thoughtful countenance. His keen eyes seemed to read the unspoken minds of those with whom he came in contact. It was true that he knew something of the world; he could read men and women to a certain point, measure their shortcomings and their vanities with a curious quickness of apprehension, but that was all. There is a far wider science of human nature, of which scarcely the first lessons had reached him. To understand people's good and generous qualities, to know their best and highest nature, we must be in some measure tuned to meet them.

Nobody knew very much about De Horn, although everybody was talking about him. Angelica used to meet him constantly. She was always glad to see him in the room when she entered. Dr. Burney was still giving his musical parties that autumn. Angelica used to go there, and De Horn rarely missed one, although he seemed not to care for literary society as a rule, and used to look with an odd expression at the tea-table and the six-weeks-old dish of baked pears which the company systematically rejected. The pears might be indifferent, but the company was of the best, and Dr. Burney, with his sword and court-dress, would come in from the Duke of Cumberland's, bringing a flavour of highest social refinement.

De Horn sometimes spoke of life in Sweden, of his home at Hafvudsta, with a certain well-bred reserve. Angelica was much interested by the few words he let drop one day concerning his picture-galleries.

"Had he pictures? What pictures?" asked Angelica.

"I trust before long that I may be able to answer your question by pointing to some now in your own studio, madam," he said, with the slow foreign accent. "What charm can those of the old men have for us compared to that which your work must ever exercise?"

This was the style of conversation that Angelica did not object to, though common sense made her reply: "I can imagine that a friend's work may have its own interest; but the old men, as you call them, Count," said Miss Angel, coquettishly, "have their own wonderful gifts, which we cannot hope to follow or repeat. What pictures have you? Are they of the Italian school?"

"Yes, yes," said the Count, absently. "Your Hobbema painted a very fine portrait of my father —"

Angelica looked puzzled. The Count suddenly began to laugh, and said, "Forgive my distractions, madam, since you are the cause of them. What were we talking about?"

"We are talking about Dr. Johnson, Count," said one of the ladies present, who did not wish Angelica to monopolize their lion. "He is expected here presently. Have you ever met him?"

"An old man—something like this," said the Count, taking a few steps and changing his face. It was a curiously effective piece of mimicry, and the result was so striking that everybody exclaimed, and began to entreat De Horn to perform some other characters. Angelica was scarcely pleased when he suddenly looked at his watch and darted across the room in imitation of Lord W.'s peculiar manner.

"No, no, no! Lord W. is the kindest man, the best of creatures," she cried. "I cannot bear to see him imitated."

"And yet you yourself have painted his portrait," said De Horn, reproachfully, immediately returning to her side. His looks seemed to say "I only did it to please you. I hate the whole thing." In vain they all begged for further specimens of his power. He took leave at the first pause in the conversation. Miss Reynolds came and sat down in the place

he had left vacant. "What an actor that man is!" the little lady said; "I wonder whether good judges would agree with me. And yet, oddly enough, it seemed to me for the first time that he was *not* acting to-night when he performed those characters. Where is your father? why have you not brought him?"

"My father is at home," said Miss Angel; "he would not come out."

Happy as he was, and proud of Angelica and of her brilliant success, and delighted as he might be by the accounts of her popularity, old Kauffmann felt very forlorn sometimes in the strange London-world into which he had penetrated, and even as if Angelica was no longer the same little Angel he had been accustomed to. At first he tried to conceal this feeling: for a week after his arrival, and on the following Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, he concealed it; on Friday his depression became too evident for Angel not to guess with her quick wits that something was amiss. The old man spent much of his time in her studio, received her guests with the old well-known formula, but, alas, here even his trump cards, the Cardinal and the Bishop of Como, seemed to have lost their potency.

Angelica used to find it difficult to impress English customs upon old John Joseph, whose familiarity and obsequiousness were sometimes a little trying to her friends. She was not one of those who dwell upon the faults of the people they love, but it was impossible to be blind to the small social difficulties that arose from time to time.

People stared at the old fellow, as Lord Henry had done, some ignored him, some turned away; certainly Lady W. was barely civil to him when she came, and if they had not had that one quarrel already, Angelica would have spoken to her on the subject. But, as it was, she dared risk no more scenes, for she did not feel in herself the strength to withstand unkind words and feelings from the person to whom she owed so much. Miss Reynolds, who had persisted in her visits, was the one person willing to listen while old Kauffmann recounted the present and past glories of Angelica's career. Alas! none were to compare to these present honours, and yet were they happier now than in the old wandering days when they knew not from hour to hour what would befall them? But people strive for something apart from happiness, and must not complain if success does not always bring those consolations which belong to less prosperous times.

Old Kauffmann felt the want of definite occupation, which is almost a necessary in life, when sunshine (that best of occupations) fails. He visited the sights most diligently. Little Rosa of the dark eyes was his companion in his walks; with her he went to see Zucchi in his lodging in Soho. There were some sights as well unseen. One day they met two carts with seven men going to be hanged at Tyburn.

The Swede's criticisms were very consoling to both the artists, shivering from Antonio's last sermon. Antonio knew what he was talking about. De Horn had natural cleverness, but no real feeling whatever for art. He praised Angelica because it suited him to do so, and when he stood

absorbed before her easel and exclaimed, "Good heavens, what genius!" he scarcely looked at the picture, but at the blushing painter.

"There is a man of worth," old John Joseph would cry, rubbing his hands. "My Angel, has he given you an order? Have you asked him the full price? Remember to ask a good price from those who can pay, to whom gold is nothing."

"I cannot agree with you there," Antonio would say. "A picture is worth its own value. I cannot endure that your daughter should sell her dignity with her work, and change her price according to the bidder."

Old John Joseph was getting very impatient of Antonio's expostulations.

"Ché, ché, ché!" he said, angrily; "keep thy hand in thy empty pocket if it pleases thee, Antonio. Thou comest with thy croak, croak, like a bird of ill omen. Go, my Angel; trouble not thyself. She looks quite pale and worn, and it is all thy doing, Antonio; thou art robbing her of her beauty and freshness."

And, sure enough, Angel suddenly began to cry.

"Yes," she said; "you wound me, you pain me; you say we are bad people, that my work is worthless, that I make money by false pretence, by defrauding other people—you, Antonio, to whom we have always tried to show kindness and affection. Why do you do it? Why do you mistrust old friends, and give us nothing but pain by your coming?"

Her irritation was caused, had Antonio but known it, by very different things, but, as people do, she vented it upon Antonio, patient and silent enough now, and cut to the heart by her fierce attack. If he had but known it, never did she feel more trust in him, never more secret longing for his help and wish for his approval, than as she stood there angry, reproachful, with angry looks and white quivering lips. De Horn's attentions had brought back the impression of Mr. Reynolds's cruel behaviour. She was to meet him that evening at Lady W.'s ball. De Horn was also to be there. Her heart was heavy with irritated foreboding. She childishly poured the suppressed irritation of the moment upon poor Antonio. The thunder had been gathering; the storm now broke.

"Is this the way you venture to speak to me?" cried Antonio, also in the wrong, also angry. "You two, who owe me a thousand benefits! Not of money, perhaps—that has not been mine to give—but is care nothing? Are anxious thought and fatigue and weariness in your service nothing? And now you, John Joseph, reproach me with my empty pocket, and forget all. You, Angelica, say that all my long fidelity and truth-speaking have given you nothing but pain. You shall be spared that pain in future. I leave you to your own infatuated vanity, to your worldly associates. Do you think I am blind? Do you think I do not see what is passing before my eyes, the baits thrown out to riches, to rank, to all unworthy objects? I don't know how much I have loved you, Angelica. Henceforth I leave you, and shall turn my thoughts away from your life and your interests. If you are sorry some day, that old fox John Joseph can come and tell me so."

And exit Antonio, banging the door.

"Oh, father!" cried Angel, falling back into a chair, and covering her eyes.

"Teh, teh!" said old John Joseph; "it is nothing, nothing, I tell you. He is insupportable with his jealousy. He will come back soon enough, on all fours, to ask our pardon. Insolent calumniator! Old fox!—did you hear, Angel, what he called me?"

This happened on the very afternoon of the day when Lady W.'s great ball was to be given. Angel, who had been looking forward to it with childish eagerness, now suddenly seemed to turn indifferent—to hate the very notion of dancing with a heavy heart; when the moment came she reluctantly followed little Rosa, who had run in to remind her that it was time to get ready. The scene with Zucchi had troubled Angelica greatly. She felt that he had been in earnest, and that he was really gone, whatever her father may say.

"Cousin Angel, are you not longing to look at your dress?" said little Rosa. "Grandpapa and I have put it out upon the bed for you for a surprise. Come, come;" and she took one of the listless hands and tried to drag her up from her seat.

It was even a greater event to little Rosa that Angelica should go to this great ball than to Angelica herself. "Will there be anybody so grand as you?" said the little thing, looking delightedly at the dress that was spread out upon the bed.

Angelica's bed-room was a great dark room, with a red paper and one or two dark old-fashioned pieces of furniture which had been left by the last inhabitant, a melancholy old bachelor who had died there. One door opened into the studio, through which little Rosa now came again, carefully carrying the tall lamp which the woman-servant had just brought up. Upon the bed lay the beautiful white brocade ready to put on, with white satin shoes pointing their toes, and the fan already prepared to flaunt. Angelica had painted it herself with her favourite theme from Poussin, of shepherds and pipes and mausoleums. How Miss Angel had enjoyed making her preparations, and now——

"You are not looking," said the little girl. To please her the young painter bent over the dress. A tear fell on the sleeve of the silver brocade, making a little stain.

"Oh, cousin!" said little Rosa, horror-stricken.

"A brocade trimmed with pearls and tears, child—that is a new fashion," said Angelica, smiling sadly, and then she sat down listlessly by the side of the bed. She was a little stunned somehow, and scarcely could have told you what had happened or why her tears were falling. After a few minutes she roused herself and began to get ready with the help of her kind little tirewoman. She felt so strangely; it seemed to her as if she had received a dull blow, and the effects were still upon her. Listless, ashamed, provoked, indignant, she had never looked less handsome than to-night. She talked on to little tiptoe Rosa; she patiently

turned and twirled before old John Joseph's admiring eyes; he held the Roman lamp on high to see her more plainly. Her dress of white brocade was a present from Lord Essex, who had brought the stuff with such evident pleasure and kindness that Angelica had not known how to refuse the gift, and she had had it made up for the great occasion.

It would have been more becoming to her than the celebrated rosebud dress, had she been in equal spirits; white is the natural colour for all young women, that in which they look their best, but Angelica's best to-night was a sad and absent best. . . .

Lady Diana had good-naturedly sent her own carriage and manservant to fetch her friend and the brocade.

"Heaven bless thee, my child!" said John Joseph, with great solemnity, when the carriage was announced. "Be good and happy, and continue to recompense your old father for all his long sacrifices. They seem to him as nothing when you are honoured and esteemed according to your merit." And then she drove off in the dark, and a page was turned over for ever in her life.

CHAPTER XXI.

"MUSICIANS WAITING; ENTER SERVANTS."

LADY W. had not spared thought and trouble to make her ball go off with all brilliancy of wax and fire, of minuet and country dance, of beauty dressed to best advantage, and music playing in time to dignified graces; servants without number were standing about the doors displaying their masters' gold-braided ambitions and bright-coloured liveries. De Horn's green lacqueys were conspicuous among them; they carried wands in their hands and wore huge nosebags. The park was lighted by torches, lamps were hanging along the avenues that led to the house. A crowd stood outside the iron gates, cheering occasionally as the long names and the splendours and persons belonging to each came driving up. I think people were less *blasé* then than they are now, and thought more seriously upon certain subjects. Dancing, for instance, and powdering, and postures took up a great deal of time; so did conversation and correspondence — of all of which exercises our own generation seems somewhat impatient, as it hurries on its way curtailing with small ceremony.

Miss Angel started in her grand equipage to take her part in all the state ceremonies, and her father put on his old cloak and prepared to follow into the crowd to have the glory of seeing his child pass into the paradise of lords. The Princess of Brunswick was to be there and other great personages. Little Rosa begged so hard to be allowed to go too, that as it was a fine November night shining with many stars and crossed by no chill winds, the old man consented to it, and the little girl started clinging to his hand and dancing with delight along the pavement. I suppose to one or two people present or in the crowd within or without every ball is delightful;

certainly little Rosa in her outer darkness was as happy as any of the splendid and lighted-up ladies within—far happier than Angel herself, who had come in a strange and depressed state of mind.

By degrees (it often happens after depression), her spirits rose wildly. If a new gown, plenty of music, smooth polished floors, admiration, and half-a-dozen persons at her elbow, could make her happy, these elements were not wanting. Antonio was gone, Mr. Reynolds had left her, but all these vanities remained. People talk of fleeting worldliness; it seemed to be the one thing that she could count upon. Friendship left her in a fury; love made a speech and walked out of the room; but here was faithful vanity, and amenities unchanging; here were partners and compliments, here was De Horn unremitting in courteous attention. Since other things were not for her, she would take what she could hold. Was Frivolity a divine goddess after all? was this to be the experience of her life, to find divinity in one thing after another? At times during that eventful evening Miss Angel's laughter and spirits were almost wild, but at others she drooped. There was anxiety in the air; the secret feelings of the last few months seemed mingling with the scene before her. Almost the first person she saw as she came into the room was Mr. Reynolds talking to one of the beautiful Ladies Waldegrave. He came up to her, held out his hand with a gentle deprecating look. She hardly knew how to respond; there was a dazzle of lights before her eyes, of music in her ears. She turned away quickly, and just realised the fact that Lady Diana, who was in crimson and looking greatly bored, was beckoning to her to come and stand by her side.

From their corner the two ladies could see into the great dining-room, which had been decorated and turned into a dancing-hall. An arch had been opened into the little octagon room, Miss Angel's late retreat.

Her bed-room had been transformed into a retiring boudoir, with lamps and low divans; almost all the windows were unshuttered, and the lights on the terrace without, and the shouts of the bystanders, seemed to make a fiery circle and outer incantation to the glittering magic within. There is a picture by Stothard of a court ball in those days, delicately and charmingly indicated. There is a sweeping and measured calm in all the brilliance, a high-bred grace and composure. Lady W.'s ball was remarkable for this mixture of brightness and grave restraining sense of high dignity present.

The country-dances were performed with great spirit. Angelica danced twice with M. de Horn, who came and reminded her that she was promised as she stood by Lady Di. De Horn's dancing was celebrated for its excellence. He was stately, composed, graceful, moving his long limbs with a sort of careless ease. When dancing, he seemed quite different from the somewhat conscious person he appeared under ordinary circumstances. His ear for music must have been remarkable; and the whole glittering set of country-dancers seemed to be inspirited and kept to the measure by this one man's performance. They swayed and bowed, and stamped their

high heels; the swords swung, the gentlemen's gold embroideries, which they shared with their lacqueys, twinkled; the stately lady figures rose and sank, and pointed their satin toes. De Horn among them all, in his black and silver, seemed to beat his own time and to keep the music itself in measure. Angelica made no secret of her pleasure in his performance. When excellence reaches a certain point, even dancing becomes a fine art, and ceases to be a personal display to real artistic natures. Perhaps this may have been a small fine art, but it was all in all for the moment; and when De Horn's glance sought Angelica's after one of their complicated evolutions, she gave a bright and unqualified look of approval and interest.

Mr. Reynolds was still standing not far off, and he saw her glance, and then he looked down at his shoebuckles, feeling as if he had no right to watch Angelica's expressions or movements any more. That look seemed to tell him he had been right to absolve his conscience. She was a ghost to him—that beautiful living woman, with the light of youth in her eyes, of interest and fine intelligence. Mr. Reynolds was gone when De Horn conducted her back to her place by Lady Di. He remained by her side, not talking exactly, for he was a *personnage muet*, and depended more upon his legs than his wits for the favour he received from the world. He stood listening to Angelica's talk with everybody else, and putting in a word every now and then more or less to the purpose.

"What a stupid man De Horn is!" said Lady Di once, when he had moved away, called off by some acquaintance. "I cannot imagine him the hero I am assured he is. They say he fought with wonderful courage at Hastenbeck a year ago. He does not look warlike now."

"Do you not think so?" said the Kauffmann. "I think the man is a very good specimen of a human being."

Was it magnetism and force of will by which De Horn made his way? It was some curious power he had of making others half interested, half afraid. Angelica dimly felt that she was in danger. He still seemed with her, even when she was talking to others. Goethe tells Eckermann about attractive and repulsive powers belonging to human beings as they walk in mysteries. It must have been some magnetic powers in De Horn which imposed upon so many.

As the handsome couple stood side by side they commanded a view of the brilliant company in the blazing hall and on the staircase drawn up to receive the Princess of Brunswick and the Duke of Cumberland, who had arrived in state. The heads bend in long line, the curtsies vie in depth and sweep: the procession sweeps on, the buzz of voices rises afresh.

Two people begin talking in the crowd of the *Daily Courant*, a newspaper which has just come out.

"Its news is not of the latest," says one of the speakers, turning to De Horn; "it announces Count De Horn's expected arrival in London *vid Paris and Dover*." It is three months after date in its intelligence.

"Is he coming?" said De Horn, with a start.

"He—who?" said the other, and De Horn seemed suddenly to remember to burst out laughing.

Angelica, preoccupied as she was, could not help wondering at the agitation this little incident seemed to produce in her partner. He presently asked her if she did not feel the heat. Would she not come nearer an open window?

"Are you ill? Pray do not think of me," she said, for she saw that he was deadly pale. But he would not leave her. He seemed to detain her, by mere force of will to keep her apart from the rest of the company.

He began talking as he had never done before. "Ah! that you were in my own rank of life!" he said once; "but what matters rank or difficulty where there is wit and courage and true love?"

She became more and more uneasy, as his manner grew more free. He followed her everywhere from room to room, into the supper-room at last, where he handed some refreshment she had asked for across a table, saying, "Let me serve you, madam. Ah! you are fortunate; here in this country you have no vexing restrictions, as with us. Before I left Sweden, a friend of mine was summoned before the magistrates for having taken a cup of chocolate in her box at the play. She was condemned to a week's imprisonment and a heavy fine."

"Is it possible?" cried Angelica. "I should be sorry to pay such a price for a cup of chocolate." (Alas! poor woman, she had to pay a heavier price than this for that which Count de Horn was now handing to her.)

"Our laws are of extraordinary severity," cried the Count. "I myself have, I fear——" he broke off abruptly. "Will you come back to the dancing-room?" he said, and he looked at her with one of those strange uncertain glances.

As De Horn's agitation grew, Angelica felt her own insensibly increase. She became more and more afraid, and once when he had been called away by one of the Princess of Brunswick's attendant pages, she precipitately engaged herself to Lord W., who happened to be standing near.

But fate seemed to interfere. Lady W. came up with a "No, W., you must *not* dance with Kauffmann. I know how much you would like to do so; but there is the Princess of Brunswick waiting to be taken in to supper. Here is Count de Horn, who will, I am sure, supply your place."

She was gone, and once more Angelica found her fingers in the grasp of the very hand she was trying to avoid. His fingers held hers so strangely, closing with a firm light pressure, that she seemed unable to resist. "Here is a seat by the window," she said, trying to avoid him, and with a sort of smile she withdrew her hand in an unconcerned way, talking of something else all the while; but again she happened to meet the look of his strange penetrating eyes as she glanced up; it seemed to her as if his glance held her as firmly as his closing fingers.

Old John Joseph was in the crowd outside, and had managed to

creep with little Rosa through the barriers. As they stood on the terrace of the garden, they saw, to their delight, Angelica go by in her brilliance, escorted by this magnificent squire.

"How white she looks, grandpapa!" said little Rosa; "is she frightened all alone?"

"She is not all alone; that great Signor is talking to her," said John Joseph. "Praised be heaven, that I see my child honoured as she deserves; all are acknowledging her rights. See, Rosa, they are looking for her, she receives a message, she is led across. Rosa! It is one of the Princess's pages who has been sent for her," cried old John Joseph, clasping his hands and creeping up closer and closer to the window and trampling the flower-bed to behold the apotheosis of his Angel as she is conducted to the great chair where the Princess is sitting in state.

"People are coming this way. Come quick," whispers little Rosa, pulling at his coat-tails. They are a timid pair, and the burst of voices frightens them, and the two creep off carefully, and, unperceived, slide along the rails and come out away into the street.

They find their way home, through dark moonlit streets, to the house where the tired servants are sleeping.

Soon little Rosa, too, is dreaming of moonlight and of music.

Old John Joseph lights his pipe and sits down contentedly in the great chair in the parlour, waiting until Angel should return; he opens the window to hear her first summons.

Long, warm, dark hours pass, and he nods sleepily in his place, all wrapped in his cloak. The open window lets in the first light of dawn, the birds begin to chirp crisply in the chill serenity.

The dawning light shines upon the ball, and upon the dancers still untiringly pursuing their mazes. It shines upon a woman who has come out from the hot glaring room, with its straining music and oppressive scent of burning wax, into the dim grey garden where the trees just rustle in the dawn, and the sparrows are whistling their early chorus with fresh precision.

All that night Angelica had felt unnaturally wound up, excited, agitated. This dim cool light seemed to call her back to rest, to tranquil mind, to reality of heart and feeling. Her dress gleamed white among shadows. Some silver cloud was drifting overhead.

Some one saw her go from the room, and came pursuing her steps. It seemed impossible to avoid De Horn, who now followed her along the twilight path. "Why do you come?" she cried exasperated; "do not you see that I would avoid you?"

"Why do I come?" said De Horn. "Madam, I have much to say to you. My happiness, my liberty, my life are in your hands. I have had news to-night—news that overwhelms me. I am in dire disgrace. My estates and my life may be forfeit. You alone can save me, save me from despair."

Angelica turned her wondering looks. She saw he was in earnest ; he looked ghastly.

"The Queen would listen to *you*," he cried. "Did you not see the Princess smile as she gave you her Majesty's message and summons to Windsor? *Your* influence would save me," he repeated.

"Indeed I will do anything," faltered Angelica, greatly moved ; "but you overrate, you entirely mistake."

"I do not overrate anything," he said, approaching his anxious face to hers, and through the dim twilight his great black eyes gleamed, and, as the light increased, she saw more plainly the lines of care and almost terror in his face. Then, before she could prevent him, he fell upon his knees and caught hold of her skirts with his two hands as he spoke.

"You have influence upon all whom you approach ; you could obtain grace for your husband," he cried, "if not for me. Oh, Angel, be that which you are, a generous and noble-hearted woman. Give me my life ! I love you to distraction, you see it, you know it. If you have one womanly feeling, one pitiful thought for a wretch in torment, you could save me, you alone." And he struck his breast.

"Oh ! no, no," said Angel, doubting, not knowing how to answer, how to escape.

He went on passionately entreating, and she, bewildered, excited, let him go on, listened with rising agitation, melted as she listened, grew interested against her own conviction, and suddenly, the spell of the moment, the passionate petition, her own yielding nature, all overcame her : some wave seemed to flow over her head, and it seemed to her as if it was no new thing ; but as if that voice had been pleading and pleading from the very beginning of life, as if all her coldness and indifference were cruelty and selfishness, and as if some conviction had come to her, that he *must* be saved at any price, she alone must save him.

Suddenly, very suddenly, very quietly, she yielded, agreed to everything, to anything he asked. She would meet him next day at the little Catholic chapel out of Manchester Square. He could hardly believe it as she spoke, hardly believe that his prize was so easily won. She would keep the secret, and as she said so he seized her hand and kissed it again and again. "Oh, you could not deceive me !" he cried.

If any one were to suspect his marriage—such were the laws of Sweden, De Horn assured her—he would be immediately carried off, imprisoned perhaps for life ; "but you, my treasure, my Angel of deliverance, under the shadow of your pure wings I shall be safe." He seemed almost overpowered, and for a moment Angelica lost courage.

But she made no opposition, when De Horn seized her hand, and pulled Lady W.'s little ring off her finger.

"This is a pledge of your truth and goodness ; you dare not fail me now." Though his words were harsh, his looks were melting ; they seemed to appeal to her very heart. She could not speak, but bent her head in assent. When she looked up De Horn was hastily escaping along a

shadowy path ; for one instant he stopped, waved farewell, and pointed towards the house, from whence a whole stream of dancers now issued.

The sun rose over the houses, a glittering stream of gold fell upon Angelica in her silver dress. As she turned to meet the company, she seemed on fire, advancing radiant and excited. How much are omens worth ?

Poor Angel ! hitherto people had reproached her with lightness of nature. Henceforward the burden of life lay heavy enough to satisfy her most envious detractors.

CHAPTER XXII.

I MIGHT FORGET MY WEAKER LOT.

ANGELICA had little knowledge of character. She was too much absorbed in her own impressions to receive very definite images of the minds of the people she lived among. She could scarcely understand how events appeared to them. For some hours she lay still upon her bed, living over and over again the strange experiences that had come to her. It seemed to her as if she alone were concerned in all. Then at last she fell into a deep sleep, from which all emotion, all fear, all regret had passed away. She only awakened to hear her father's voice softly calling her from the room outside.

"Angelica, Angelica, my child !"

"Yes, father," answered Angel with a sigh, awakening.

The door was locked, and she did not uncloset it.

"I hear that Zucchi is in town, preparing for a journey to Italy," said old Kauffmann through the chink. "Will you come with me, Angelica, and bid farewell to that misguided young man ?"

"I am tired, father," said Angelica ; "cannot he come and see us as usual ?"

"I have been at his lodgings," continued old Kauffmann mysteriously.

"I cannot persuade him to come, Angelica. You, my child, have more influence than I over that hog-headed youth. Haste ! haste ! dress thyself, and come with thy old father. I want to hear of last night. What did they say to thee ? they did not ask after thy old father, Angelica ?"

"I cannot go out ; I am busy this morning," said Angel from within : she had now risen and was coming and going about the room.

She was determined not to be absent that morning ; De Horn might come ; a message might come. What was this strange new state of mind in which she did not dare to face her father. She found that she dreaded meeting him. The thought of seeing Antonio, also, frightened her : she felt as if he would read her very heart in one glance.

Old Kauffmann was surprised that his daughter should venture to be obstinate. His temper had been ruffled by Zucchi's reception. He had already visited him that morning. The young man was busy packing ; winding up his affairs, seeing to many details. Old Kauffmann's reproach-

ful reconciliation rather bored him than otherwise. Zucchi was pre-occupied, depressed by his father's death, hurrying to his brothers and sisters. Old Kauffmann, with his martyr-like airs, vexed him. His moral aphorisms about resignation, his long descriptions of his own household prosperity and elevation, were not calculated to put Antonio into better spirits. Old Kauffmann perceived that something was amiss. And so he had determined that Angelica must come herself to the rescue. But Angelica is also obstinate, will not open, and calls out from time to time, "I am coming, father. Dear father, do not knock so loud. Let me dress in peace."

Do I disturb your peace? "Is this the way you speak to your father?" shouts the old fellow, more and more irate and vexed by every moment's delay. "After my years of care, of self-denial, after the education I have bestowed upon you, with efforts scarcely to be told," he says, raising his voice, for he hears footsteps approaching, and is glad of an audience to his wrongs—"is this the way to treat your father, whose long sacrifices came to the very notice of the Lord Cardinal. Ungrateful child, where is your obedience? why do you refuse to accompany me on this visit of reconciliation and farewell?"

Then he looked round to see who had come in, and what the effect of his eloquence had been upon the visitor; was it Antonio after all? Antonio at that moment was far away in spirit. Could Angelica have seen his heart as it was then it might have added a pang to the moment. How bitterly did he reproach himself afterwards for his indifference and failure at this critical time. Some phase had come over him. Weariness of waiting, conviction of the hopelessness of his dreams; for the first time vivid personal preoccupations had come to separate him from Angelica's interests. It was not Antonio but De Horn who walked in upon Kauffmann's recriminations. He found him with his long blue coat-tails flying, and his nose against Angelica's panel.

"Ungrateful child!" the old father shouts with renewed eloquence. "What an example for thy little innocent Cousin Rosa, my dead brother's only daughter—a legacy to our tenderness," and then Angelica from within hears a second voice and a change of tone in old John Joseph. Her heart beats faster than ever. It is De Horn already come. Come—for what? Her trembling fingers tangle the strings. She can hardly fasten her dress, pin on the great flapping cap, beneath which her eyes shine so brightly; hook the band round her waist: somehow or other she is ready at last, she flings open her window for a breath of air, and then with shaking hands unlocks her door and comes forth. The studio is all full of sunshine. It is late in the morning and the sun is high.

De Horn bows low as she appears. He is standing in the window with her father.

Old Kauffmann had been for the last few minutes escorting the Count from portfolio to portfolio, exhibiting Angelica's performances with a running commentary of his own, diving into portfolios, and all the while secretly calculating the possible sum to which De Horn would go for orders.

"Here is your Excellency's own suggestion, *Garte à fous*" (so he pronounced it), "rendered by my naughty inspired one. That one, possessed with such gifts of heaven, should prove rebellious to her father's expressed desire, is indeed a lesson to all. Then seeing Angelica's worn looks, he cried, "Thou art pale, my child. Why didst thou not tell me thou wert tired?" and old Kauffmann, with real tenderness, went hurrying up to her and took her listless hand.

"'Tis nothing, father, only last night's excitement," she answered.

Then she stood silent. She could not look at the Count, but turned her head away.

He advanced slowly and was silent for an instant.

"I came, madam, according to our appointment, to invite you to visit Lord Henry's gallery of pictures," said De Horn, at last, with a keen expressive glance, which made Angelica's cheeks blush crimson.

"Ah, now she is looking better," said old Kauffmann, eagerly. "Go, my child, go with his Excellency. Why didst thou not explain? . . . A walk will do thee good. I will return to that ingrate. Where is the sketch for her Majesty's portrait, Angelica. The Count is anxious to see it. We think of representing the Queen as Venus awakening the sleeping arts of England. The idea seems to me worthy of our great Dante himself."

Then he went on talking of the ball, of the Princess, of the brilliant scene of his Angel's triumph the night before; then he said he should delay no longer, but return at once to Zuechi at his lodging. "It is better to forget the past; Antonio is a young man who owes almost everything to our protection; he has proved himself an ingrate, but that is no reason to give him up altogether," said old Kauffmann. Angelica did not hear a word he said. She saw him put on his cloak, look about in the corner of the room for his stick, take his three-cornered hat and go off, calling to little Rosa who was at play down below. Angelica, in her state of suppressed excitement and nervousness, was at once terrified to be alone with De Horn, and, longing for some further explanation, some greater certainty, she did not want to face what was before her. She tried to forget everything in the present. The present was this unknown person, so familiar, already so mysterious. The present was her own studio, her own beating heart, her pictures in every corner, the dreams, and the allegories, and the fanciful bedizenments of the truth.

People are sometimes distraught and driven on by unaccountable impulses. These two people seemed possessed; it is impossible to say what was real, what was mere illusion in their relation. "I have brought you back your ring," said the Count, quickly; "come, there is no time to be lost. I have made all arrangements. Will you come?" he repeated, and he took both her hands, and looked at her with his deep eyes.

"Do you remember the day we first met?" De Horn continued, gazing at her fixedly. "Some strange presentiment drew me in your steps. I followed you in my gondola; I watched you as you passed from picture to picture in the Doge's Palace. Angelica, from the first moment I knew

you, I had a presentiment how it would end ; even when you left Venice, I knew I should see you again."

"Lady Diana had a presentiment too, I suppose," said Angelica, recovering a little and speaking with a gentle laugh.

De Horn turned white, then black. "I was mad. I am in earnest now," he said. Then eagerly, "Don't delay, pray do not delay ! The time is running short ; the priest is waiting ; you have promised ; you, Angelica, are not of those who deceive."

"I hope not," said she, clasping her hands.

Angelica went stubbornly into her room, dressed herself, pulled on her silk hood, the broad frills fell over her face. Then she came out and returned to the studio, where De Horn was waiting gazing at her picture : he sprang forward with two long strides. "Are you ready ?" he said. "My good Angel ! my preserver ! my idol !" So he called her. His love-making was somewhat to order, somewhat mechanical, so she afterwards felt. At the time she was in a state of such strange excitement that she did not very clearly know what he said. She only knew that this was some one who was grateful for her favours, some one in trouble whom she could serve ; that by serving him she best served herself.

Here was a protector able and willing to help her. Henceforth she should have her own standing place in the world ; no longer to be tossed to and fro by variable tides, no longer be dependent upon the chance favours of fashion, of patrons, upon their humours and fancies. She should have some one to turn to whose right it would be to defend her, some one noble, generous, gentle, the prince of her wildest dreams. People might blame, let them blame ; she had a *right*, as other women had, to be loved, to give happiness, and to receive it ; who should dare interfere.

Little Rosa saw them as they started and came running up. "Grand-papa did not take me with him. May I come with you, cousin ?" she asked, taking Angel's hand.

Angelica held the little fingers tight in hers for an instant, and looked up at De Horn, who shook his head impatiently. "Go back, child," she answered, with a soft kiss ; "I shall not be long away from you." She remembered the words afterwards, and they seemed to her significant.

The child looked up wondering as they walked away along the sun-shining pavement, then they and their shadows crossed the angle of the square and disappeared behind the railings—the light drifting figure, the tall black man with his sword and his cocked-hat.

De Horn appeared impassive as usual, but secretly he was in a fume of impatience. They were not safe until they had reached the church. They walked quickly and in silence. Angelica scarcely knew how to speak to him ; once she felt inclined to turn back : they were passing the house where Zuechi lodged, some scarce controllable impulse made her stop ; but as she hesitated she looked in her companion's face, and that one glance showed her it was too late. He pulled her hand through his arm, and she knew that she was glad it was too late.

Everybody knows how strangely all the things that people have been

and felt and loved sometimes, almost from very vividness seem to lose their separate existence in our mind. The images grow confused, and we know what we fear and hope without realising why or how. Angelica was in some such state as she hurried on with De Horn.

The people along the street made way for them as they hastened past. No one seemed to notice them particularly; she saw the common story of every day—the fishwives shouting their wares, the coaches rolling, the windows opening and shutting; they also met a ghastly procession on its way to Tyburn, with a crowd hurrying along. De Horn turned pale, drew her closer to him and hurried away down a side street. They stopped at last at the low doorway in a passage out of Spanish Place. Afterwards Angelica remembered that a great carriage went by just then; as it passed she saw the harness glittering in the sun.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SIGN.

IN supreme moments of life people notice many things unconnected with the circumstance that is impending. Angel ever after remembered the stupid little details of that morning's walk, and the sight of the glittering of harness in the sunshine would give her some odd feeling of mingled shame and regret, so did the swing of a curtain at times when it took a certain fold. De Horn held up the old curtain that swung before the chapel door, and she walked in with her hand upon his arm. It was a warm sunshiny morning, the streaks of dusty light reached to the altar, where a priest was standing with an open book, and the two chorister boys were in attendance. Now-a-days such a thing could not be, even then it was scarcely possible; but chance and opportunity had helped De Horn. He had met the priest, perhaps the only man in London who would have served his purpose, and his evil genius had not failed him yet.

The ceremony began, and then Angel finds herself before the altar, looking at the darkened picture of Mary Mediatrix with the stabbed heart in flames. And the priest reads on, and the words of fate echo through the chapel, and the dream is dreamed out—a dream of blessing, a dream of prayer, a dream of peace never to be fulfilled. The whole thing seems so real, and is so baseless a fabric, a semblance only of what might have been so true for both these people. The prayers beat against the walls with chill echoes, the little choristers swing their incense; outside in the street the people are passing on their daily business. A woman seeing the door open comes in and kneels in a quiet corner of the chapel; the Count started and looked round uneasily, hearing footsteps; then, reassured, he turned his dark eyes, not without some expression of feeling, upon the bent head by his side. And then the priest's voice ceases at last and the boys give a parting swing to their censers. It is over; the blessing is spoken in Latin, reluctantly enough and inefficaciously enough, to vindicate the power of all true benedictions.

"You have yet to sign," said the priest hoarsely; he was an oldish man, and seemed ill and scarce able to stand. More than once his voice had faltered as he read the service. He came slowly down the steps of the altar and led the way to the vestry. There, after taking off his robe and slipping on his common daily vestment, he fetched a great book from a closet, and made them sign *Frederick De Horn—Angelica Kauffmann* in the ruled place in the long column.

Angelica, incautious, incomplete, loving-hearted, went on acting in this dream as if it were all a reality, and looked up smiling with her eyes full of tears. "You see I have done as you wished," she said. And the stranger she had so imprudently trusted, forgetting for one instant that it was but a semblance of a shadow, broke out into some vehement and almost tender protestations of affection and unalterable fidelity.

Then he turned, still holding her hand, and whispered something to the priest and slipped some money into his palm. The priest seemed to demur, to ask for something more.

De Horn looked vexed. Angelica was still absorbed and not very observant.

"Have you a purse?" said De Horn to her; "in my agitation I have forgotten mine."

Angelica fumbled in her pocket and put her little purse with its hard-earned guineas into his hand with a low laugh.

"I did not know it cost so much to get married," she said gaily.

"This is an unusual marriage," the priest replied, knitting his brows; "the fees are very heavy, and there may be more to pay."

Then arm in arm the new-married pair walked down the aisle in silence; there was no triumph of music and friendship to escort them, but they heeded it not, and they came to the doorway where the curtain was swinging. Again De Horn lifted it, for his bride to pass under, and stepped back into the shadow as he did so. She, with her radiant beaming face, stepped out into the sunshiny street, and at that moment by some strange chance a lady crossing the road followed by her footman came face to face with the new-made bride. Angelica stopped, turned white, then crimson.

"You! Angelica, I am in good luck to meet you," cried Lady Diana, for it was she. "What, have you been confessing to your priest? Why do you look so amazed, child?"

"How did—how came you here?" faltered Angelica.

"I have a cousin living in Manchester Square. Lady W—— set me down just now, and the day was so fine that I determined to walk home," said Diana, smiling. "I did not expect to find such good company along the road."

Lady Diana seemed to take it for granted that Angelica would walk back with her, and began to move onwards at an easy pace. Angelica lingered and looked round anxiously and bewildered. De Horn had not come out. Lady Diana remembered afterwards how strange her manner had been.

"Could you—could you wait here," said Angelica, with a little cry,

in great agitation. "Don't—don't come in with me. I will—my confessor." She pushed against the leather curtain and rushed into the chapel again, trembling lest Diana should follow. The place was quite empty now, no one was praying or being married at the altar, all the lights were out. De Horn was not there. She crossed, calling him once or twice gently, and reached the door of the vestry where they had signed the papers a few minutes before. As she came along Angelica heard voices, those of De Horn and the priest who had married them. Were they angry? Surely she heard wrongly?

"If you dare," said De Horn; but as she opened the door she found herself almost in his arms. "Is she gone, my Angel?" he cried in a different tone.

"Lady Diana is waiting; shall I tell her? oh, may I tell her all?" said Angelica imploringly.

"Not now, not now," he answered emphatically. "Good heaven! do you know that my very life may be forfeited if you do not keep my secret?" Then he gently put her away. "Go back now," he said; "go with her, it will prevent suspicion. I will make my arrangements; leave all to me. I shall follow you to Windsor. As soon as it is safe for me to speak, the whole world shall be aware of my happiness. Go now, Angel of my life. She might suspect if you delay," he said in great agitation, as he led her gently towards the door; and somehow Angel found herself alone, quite alone in the dim chapel once more, with a strange sinking of heart. She heard Lady Di's straggling footsteps coming in search of her.

"Is he gone?" said Lady Di, slipping her hand into her friend's arm.

"He, who?" faltered Angelica. "What do you mean?"

"Did you not tell me that you were looking for your confessor?" said the other lady. "Ah! child, I fear that for some people there are many things to confess after a ball," and she smiled and then sighed a little sadly. Then, as they came away, she went on talking more seriously, saying that for her part she was glad to have been born a Protestant in a Protestant country. "I could not endure," she said, "to feel myself in the bondage of another person's will; perhaps that is why I have remained protesting," she said, "neglected, but free."

Angelica scarcely listened as Lady Di talked on; it was with difficulty she could bring herself to answer. No wonder that she was absorbed in her own affairs. She had thrown herself into her part, with all her fervour of nature; this strange future did not frighten her, although her heart beat with some vague alarm. Should she be able to do her duty by her husband? She was not afraid, nor did she fear for her father. Surely, surely, she should be able to make his happiness still. Was it not her special gift to make those happy whom she loved? Where had Lady Diana wandered in her talk? . . .

"Dear Angelica," she was saying, "you must forgive me now if I say something to you which has often been upon my lips. There is one person who frightens me for you—one person who haunts your steps. I could not help noticing his manner the night of our ball. There is some-

thing about that man—something false, believe me. I would not trust him with any one or any thing I prized."

"How suspicious people are," cried Angelica, firing up passionately; "how uncharitable in their judgments. What has Count de Horn done to you or me but kindness? How, how can you speak so cruelly?" All her pent-up agitation broke into tears of excitement. Lady Diana was not a little indignant with her for her childishness.

"You are perfectly absurd," said that plain-spoken lady. "I have little patience, as you know, with affectation. What is Count de Horn to you or to me, that we should quarrel about him?" They had reached the door of Angelica's own house by this time. Wearied out and over-excited, the poor bride pulled the bell, and, when her servant came, rushed in without a word, without bidding her friend farewell, brushing past her father on the stair, and once more ran into her own room and locked herself in, in a passion of tears and excitement.

But this storm did not last long. In an hour she had recovered, and came out and joined her two companions. She might be silent to them of what had passed, but she would condescend to no small deceptions, so she determined. Yes, she had been crying. "Never mind, father," she repeated, clinging to him for an instant; "it is no real trouble affects me. I know not," she added, "whether it is happiness or sorrow." She said this with the old familiar action, and holding his arm. She had never been sweeter than at that moment.

Her grace, her tranquillity, her gentle bright emotion, unconsciously reassured him. Little Rosa caught some hidden gaiety from her cousin's manner. "How pretty you look, cousin Angel, in your white dress," said the child, "but the winter is come, you will not be able to wear it any more."

"Antonio is gone," said the old man. "I saw him start. His father is dead. Antonio's doings are mad enough to frighten his friends. He has given up the chief part of his inheritance to his sister, he tells me. I think he does it on purpose to make me angry."

Whatever poor Angelica may have shown of feeling that day, it is certain that her bridegroom never lost his composure. He came again that afternoon, actually called as usual, and finding some company present played a part as if nothing had happened, and to Angelica's dismay went away without a look or a sign, leaving Lord Henry discoursing upon the beauty of waxwork and its superiority to marble. Rossi describes De Horn's perfect calm through all this deception. This man's interested feeling was so mixed up and complicated with real respect and admiration that it would have required a far more diffident and suspicious person than my poor heroine to distinguish the false from the true, in all that had happened. De Horn's part with her was not all acted; that was the difficulty. Others found him out, because with them he was but a performer, with her he was as sincere as it was possible for a man of his nature to be.

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"ARE YOU ALREADY MARRIED?" "AM NOT I YOUR WIFE?"



"ARE YOU ALREADY MARRIED?" "AM NOT I YOUR WIFE?"